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DE CLIFFORD;
THE CONSTANT MAN.
COLLECTION
OF ANCIENT AND MODERN
BRITISH AUTHORS.

VOL. CCCXIV.

DE CLIFFORD; OR, THE CONSTANT MAN.

I.

BRITISH AUTHORS.
OF ANCIENT AND MODERN
COLLECTION

VOL. CCXIV.

DE GILFORD; OR, THE CONSTANT MAN.

DE CLIFFORD;

OR,

THE CONSTANT MAN.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF "TREMAINE," "HUMAN LIFE," ETC.

Ward

Cum magnis vixi, cum plebeis, cum omnibus;
Ut homines noscerem, et meipsum imprimis.

DR. KING'S *Epitaph upon Himself*.

VOL. I.



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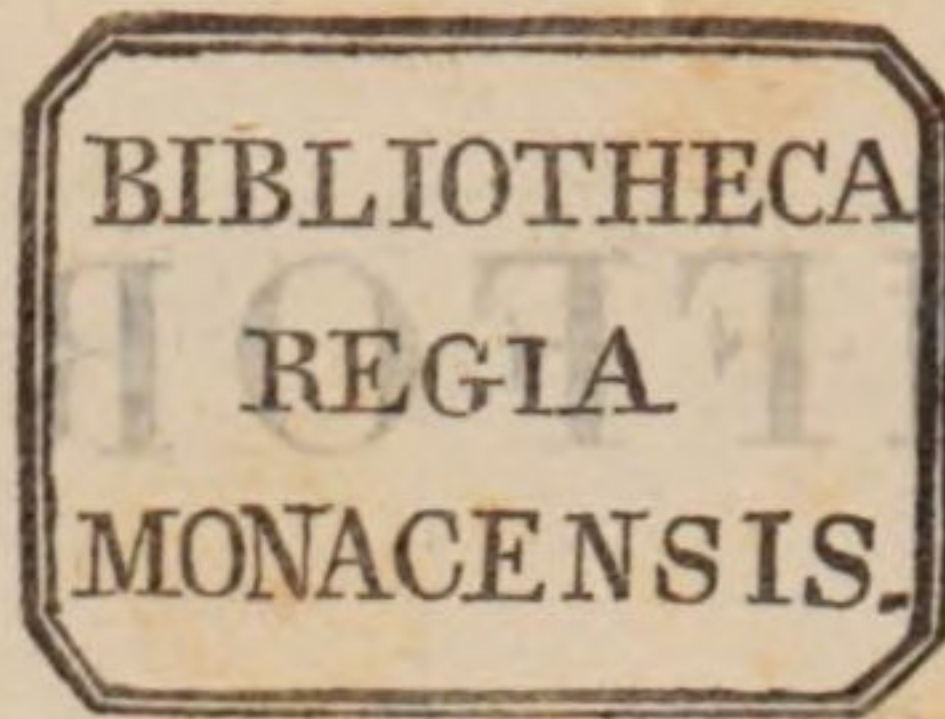
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BROCKHAUS AND AVENARIUS, RUE RICHELIEU; LEOPOLD NICHOLSEN LEIPZIG;
AND BY ALL THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS ON THE CONTINENT.

—
1841.

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THE CONSTANT MAN

BY THE AUTHOR

OF "THE MAN," "HUMAN LIFE," ETC.

From various views, from physical, from omnibus,
the human mind, of modern importance,
the King's Epitaph upon himself.

VOL. I.



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1841.

TO THE
LADY FREDERICK BENTINCK.

“ With age decayed, with courts and business tired,
Caring for nothing but what ease required,
I little thought of launching forth again
Amidst adventurous rovers of the pen’.”

SUCH were the words of a man, one of the most eminent of his time, whether we consider his character for arts, arms, general literature, or poetry; whether as a courtier, a politician, or a man of quality. What business then have I with them, will your ladyship say, resembling him in none of these particulars? My answer is, that if I do not in any thing else, I resemble him in the four lines I have quoted. It is certain (though I do not like, even at seventy-six, to talk of “age decayed”) that I am not a little older than when I first had the honour and good fortune of being known to you; that I have done with courts; am tired of business; and now care for nothing but what ease requires.

Were I, therefore, wise, perhaps I should not again launch forth in the hazardous craft of authorship. But as the illustrious Sheffield did not refrain from doing this, though all the reasons he has enumerated forbade him, so I, having perhaps as much leisure left as his Grace had when he ventured once more on the ocean of letters, presume to follow his example. Pray heaven I may, like him, safely return into port!

To pursue the figure I have adopted, I feel like one of those ancient mariners, who, after having passed much of their time in making voyages (whether prosperous or not), do not like to be laid up on shore for the rest of their lives, short as they may be. Their fancy represents that there may still remain some creek or coast which they have not explored; and not willing that their bark should be moored in idleness, they once more weigh anchor, and give her sails to the breeze. In plain English, though tired of business, yet more tired of having nothing to do, I, like the nobleman I have quoted, once more enlist

“ Amidst the adventurous rovers of the pen.”

¹ Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham.

“Very good,” you may reply; “but what have I to do with all this, that you chose to address me upon it?”

More perhaps than you are aware of. For though a name can do little for a work which cannot do any thing for itself, yet if that work can stand at all of itself, such a name as yours, like a Corinthian capital, may give that elegance and ornament to the shaft which are necessary to make it complete.

This I should say, if there were no other reason to make me wish to inscribe this labour of mine to your ladyship. But, on its perusal, all my readers (at least all who know you) will perceive ample and appropriate reason for the wish. For who that may take the trouble of investigating the character of Bertha, in the following pages, and remembers the graces of your young years—but above all, who that has witnessed the delightful affection and mutual esteem that have so long united you and your revered and noble father—but must allow that the delineation of such a portrait is most appropriately dedicated to *you*? How justly might I not also extend this still farther, and, following you from girlhood to maturer years, give the same reason for recommending the character of Lady Hungerford to your protection. At all events, I have a secret, but deep-felt pleasure, in thinking, that in being allowed thus to address you, a friendship which has gilded so many years of my life, and has been marked with such kindness and condescension on your part, may be told to the world; and, if so, what can it tell of me but honour?

As to the work itself, if it beguile an hour of your time, by any thing like amusement; or, if in thus addressing it to you, I may cause you to believe that I have been as constant in my devotion to you (though in a different way) as Clifford was to Bertha; I shall be richly paid for the care it has cost me.

With this I am, as I have long—long been—your most obliged and attached friend and servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Okeover Hall, Staffordshire.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

My motives (if the world care for an author's motives) for engaging in this work, I have, in part, detailed in the preceding epistle to the noble person there addressed.

The work has at least innocently, if not usefully, filled a great deal of leisure, and adds one more Picture of Human Life to those which (with whatever success) I have already presumed to offer to the world. One, however, seemed to be still wanting to the series, and that was the impressions made by men and manners on a very young and unsophisticated mind, just starting into life, beginning even from his boyish days; and this, the total inexperience of the hero, and the very varied knowledge of those whom I may call his tutors, gave me, I thought, a good opportunity to accomplish.

For the better promotion of my object, it was necessary that the view taken should not be the mere bird's-eye view of a man surveying the world at his ease, from a comfortable retreat, but that he should be himself an actor, encountering and overcoming difficulties, and earning by exertion and reflection whatever knowledge he might acquire.

Then again, as in all epics, whether in prose or verse, some great passion must predominate and pervade the whole, in order to produce and continue the action, what could I do better than to make the hero, as a lover, the mirror of constancy? Such love at least teaches this lesson, among the thousands taught by this all-pervading passion—that, whatever its good or ill success, where the object is well chosen, and the love pure, it ennobles the mind, and keeps it stainless, delicate and honourable, through all vicissitudes.

The story of Sir Harry Melford does not contradict, but rather confirms this, as it was his pride as much as his affection that was so wounded¹.

All this, however, at once stamps on the work the character of a novel, and throws on the author the responsibility of a novelist.

¹ See Vol. II.

What that responsibility is, I am not going to examine, in this novel-writing age, when it must long ago have been settled; especially as I find it done to my hand, by a shrewd and able critic, in a manner so concentrated, and yet so comprehensive, that nothing is wanting to make it complete.

"These features," says the critic, referring to manners and description of scenery, "though necessary in a fiction, are not its main essentials,—which consist in the power to construct a story *at once surprising and congruous*, and of creating characters consistent with *nature, themselves, and the circumstances of their lives*, as well as of truly developing them in conduct, narrative, and dialogue¹."

Nothing can be more lucid than this direction, and I will only add, that in the following pages I have endeavoured to construct a story at once surprising and congruous, and to create characters consistent with nature, themselves, and the circumstances in which they are placed.

My chief object, however, being a view of motives to action, as well as the more tender motions of the heart, I am aware that there are in the book, as I think there ought to be, many didactic digressions and episodes.

For these I shall not offer the least apology to anybody who chooses to quarrel with them. All may not have the same taste; but for myself, I see not how a novel which has for its object something more than the mere pictures of a magic-lantern, and aims at a knowledge of the springs of human nature, as well as amusement, can possibly realize that object without *partaking* of the didactic character.

Those who differ from me are welcome to their opinion. I pursue mine till I have met with better reasons than I have hitherto heard, against the mingling of didactic digression with amusing narrative.

The discussions indeed here presented are, from the inexperience of the youthful De Clifford, absolutely called for as a part of his first initiation into life. I only wish that I were as sure of the merit of their execution as I am of the propriety of their introduction.

¹ Review of "Greyslayer," in the *Spectator* of July 11th, 1840.

DE CLIFFORD'S

PREFACE TO THE MEMOIR.

WHAT has prompted me, in my old age, to conceive the notable design of writing any part of my history, much more to publish it, will, I have no doubt, be indifferent to the world. But that world is gone by me, and I have nothing left but reminiscences of the past for my mind to rest upon; and perhaps it is better to indulge them than to go to sleep before my time.

This, however, only concerns myself. What is it to others?

Why, something; for it will shew a good deal of what is of consequence to a human creature—the knowledge of his own heart, and something of that of others. Upon this subject I will translate some passages of a French letter now before me, which will perhaps explain what I would say, as to the scope and end of the following pages, better than I could myself.

“ You put me at ease, Sir, in dispensing with the necessity of telling you the news of the day, which you rightly call a second edition of the days that have gone before; the only difference being in the names of the actors who appear on the scene. There are the same intrigues, the same changes. Nothing resembles current news more than the news which is past. But when our study is the heart, we need not go out of ourselves (if we chose to think so) to get at an endless diversity. And yet what a spectacle is our soul, when we leave the contemplation of it for the frivolities which engage us! For we then seem to abandon the study of our own hearts and understandings, to be the confidants of all the rest of the world. Thus we know everybody's mind but our own. Don't talk to me of a man whose soul preserves an incognito to himself. Yet, when plunged in luxury and pleasure, how can it be otherwise? Mallebranche got out of

fashion because people preferred a search for pleasure to a search after truth. But recal a man to an inquiry after his duty, or the nature of his being as it appears in his life, and the 'Recherches de la Vérité' will again be the mode¹."

To all this I agree, and if in relating what I have felt myself, and witnessed in others, "I wind me into the easy-hearted man," and set him before himself, shall it be said that the attempt is useless? I trust not, and therefore hasten to begin, though far from certain whether, after beginning, I shall proceed far with my notable undertaking.

Let me add, that I have no wish to disguise the many weaknesses that will appear in this memoir. Who, that is human, is without them? Besides, as one of my chief objects is, if possible, to be a beacon to others who may be pursuing the same path, I should ill perform my task if I did not set myself down exactly as I was.

What I attempt is a history of heart; and I hope I shall not fail.

¹ Lettres Récréatives.

DE CLIFFORD;

OR,

THE CONSTANT MAN.

CHAPTER I.

MY BIRTH AND PARENTAGE. PICTURE OF A DECAYED GENTLEMAN.

Though my estate be fallen, yet I was well born.

SHAKSPEARE.—*All's Well that Ends Well.*

What are you?

Your name? Your quality? —————

——My name is lost.——

Yet am I noble.—*Lear.*

What shall I say you are?

Tell the Earl,

That the Lord Bardolfe doth attend him here.—*2 Hen. IV.*

As an autobiographer generally commences with his birth, parentage, and education, I will, in this outset of my history, say something of mine.

Though (particularly in the early part of my life) I was little known to fame or fortune, I derive my lineage from remote, and even illustrious antiquity. My name is De Clifford, and I trace myself, in a direct line, from the renowned feudal barons of that name, though so high up, that (and I am not sorry for it) I have none of the blood of the murderer of young Rutland in my veins. My immediate ancestors spring from Sir William De Clifford, son to Roger Lord Clifford, a baron of the time of King Richard the Second. I mention Sir William in particular, because from his marriage with one of the co-heiresses of the unfortunate Lord Bardolfe, of Shaksperian, as well as historic memory, he became possessed of the lordship and castle of Bardolfe, in the parish of that name, in the north, where I first drew breath, and where the wreck of our family, shorn of its beams, have continued sinking ever since.

Here the line of Bardolfe flourished as barons summoned to Parliament, till Thomas, fifth baron, the friend of old Northumberland, perished with him in the battle of Bramham Moor, fighting for

York against Henry IV. Moreover, though his death in the field deprived him of the honour of losing his head with the Mowbrays and Nevilles, after the battle, a noble revenge was glutted in regard to his body, by quartering what were called his rebel limbs, and exposing them on the gates of London, York, Lynn, and Shrewsbury, while his head ornamented that of London.

But, how little did this high lineage, and this honourable fate, avail his descendants ! His attainder and forfeitures reduced the family ; and though the castle, and part of the estate of Bardolfe, was restored to my female ancestress on her marriage with Sir William De Clifford, yet it was so diminished in value, and Sir William, being a younger brother, was so little distinguished by the gifts of fortune, that he could not hold up his head with the rest of the Cliffords. Even they are now all dissipated, the heirs male of the original barony being long ago extinct ; and, though both titles and fortune have been carried by females into other illustrious families, the old name itself of De Clifford is nearly lost in the same obscurity in which our branch of it had so long continued ¹.

From this account of our fate, it will not be surprising that all intercourse between ourselves and our high relations had for a very long time been entirely dropped ; we did not well know even to whom we belonged ; the posterity of Sir William De Clifford almost became Bardolfes, and, lowering by degrees to almost nothing, continued in the village where the heads of that name had originally flourished, while the castle and manor of Bardolfe had long passed by sale into other hands.

Thus, with all his ancient blood, my father was, in substance, scarcely more than a farmer—a gentleman farmer indeed, with a better title to armorial bearings than almost all his rich neighbours, who yet looked down upon him as, at the very best, that mortified, though not always humbled character, a “decayed gentleman.”

Yet, as if to mock him the more, as his very small estate, the remnant of former times, was his own, he was designated, in the language of the northern province where it lay, by the high-sounding title of *Statesman*. What sort of honours belonged to that title may be imagined by the southern reader, when he learns that the possessor of a freehold of twenty, nay of ten pounds a year, enjoys that denomination among his simple neighbours.

The family had so long gone down hill, that my father had quietly descended with it into the class, and almost into the character, of mere yeomen. Had he done so entirely, and not cast, as he sometimes, though seldom, did, a longing look to what his progenitors had been, he would, perhaps, have been happier. But luckily these interruptions came not often, and did not last long.

¹ As I trace only from the ancient barony, to which alone I allude, no mention is made of that other barony of Clifford of Chudleigh, a creation of Charles II.

Our name, which had been for centuries on the grand jury, was not yet struck out, and my father was summoned regularly, as if still one of the squirearchy. It was then that a sort of struggle between pride and prudence commenced, in which pride, for the time, generally got the better : for he always attended, and was always mortified.

Though upon the grand jury, not being a proper subject for the commission, he was the only one of them not included in the invitations to dinner given in open court by the judge ; and when the jury advanced with their presentments, with their rich and titled foreman at their head, he was seen among them, hesitating, alarmed, and bashful, and evidently sustaining a struggle of hurt feelings. He wished to shew himself to the court, and the notice of the county, but allowed every one that pleased to push before him, so that he could not be seen. Or if he ever obtained a place to be observed, it was only by entreaty, which yet it hurt him to make. While in the discharge of duty, his brother jurymen were not uncivil, and he felt some little consequence ; but the assizes over, he was instantly extinguished, and returned to peace and obscurity at home. The first of these my father found so valuable, that he frequently vowed never again to hazard it, by attending another assizes ; but the vow was always broken, and he agreed with my mother (herself of an origin somewhat better than plebeian, being the daughter of the younger son of a knight), that the pretensions of the blood of the De Cliffords and Bardolfes ought not to be sacrificed without a struggle.

There was, however, another reason that told in producing this feeling. I have said we had descended in the scale of gentility, but it was by degrees. At the Revolution, my great-grandfather was of no mean consideration among the Yorkshire Whigs, and owned the castle which gave us one of our names, though he sold it, in the end, to make good a large portion to his only sister, who married into a very noble family. This was so flattering to his pride, that he agreed to give her a fortune far beyond his means, to the still further reduction of the funds of his posterity. Nor did he reap the advantages he hoped from the connexion ; for the figure and fortune of the two families being so unequal, they first grew cool, and then were absolutely estranged from one another ; so that my grandfather had no intercourse with his aunt's family, and dying when my father was an infant, and there being no maiden aunt to keep up remembrances, the very name of these high relatives seemed even then almost forgotten.

A week, however, generally restored my father to himself, and, forgetting the gentleman in the farmer, he returned, as I have observed, to obscurity, and his usual occupations.

Luckily these gave him little time to reflect upon any thing but

how to turn them best to account, in support of a numerous family, which, *statesman* as he was, forced him to eke out his income by renting a considerable farm under Sir Harry Goff, the squire of the neighbouring parish.

This gentleman's family was the highest in degree with which we had any intercourse, though that of Hastings, to whose ancestors the old castle and manor of Bardolfe had passed, by the sale I have mentioned, above a century before, were of higher descent, and of infinitely higher fashion and condition. They, however, resided in a distant part of the country, and, for some years at least, I knew nothing of them but their name. The castle, indeed, had, all but one tower, long been in ruins, like its former owners ; and though very picturesque and romantic, frowning from the top of a steep bank which rose abruptly from the river (also bearing our name), it afforded no temptation, because without accommodation, for any of the present owners to visit it.

What was left of it besides this tower were mere perforated walls, held together only by the tough embraces of the ivy and caucus ; yet, there was a "sullen dignity" about this old place, which, with other reasons, made it my absolute delight. But I am yet scarcely born, so must not anticipate.

I had several brothers (for my mother was more prolific than rich) ; and a child once a year, for five years together, did not add to the means of the Statesman. My brothers, however, had huge limbs and healthy stomachs—which latter by no means regarded the coarse porridge and milk of the north as an evil. In short, they all grew and waxed strong, and gave our parents little uneasiness on the score of health.

They were all rather favourites with the Goff family, and the good-natured Sir Harry (who derived his fortune and descent only from a rich clothier), in his secret mind, could not help showing us much consideration on account of our blood.

The truth is, that Sir Harry and his wife and family, though very independent as to money, were not at all so as to their position in life. With many sterling qualities, they spoiled all, by quitting what they were (plain country folks), to be what they were not, denizens of fashion.

In this they lavished more money than taste. Sir Harry's common sense was rendered inefficient by a factitious fondness for the arts, and what he called literature, of neither of which he knew much ; and his wife and daughters thought fashion consisted in being always over-dressed, and talking what they called French.

All this dazzled their country neighbours, whatever it might do the people they copied ; and as in other respects they had a sort of general familiarity of manner, they were not without consideration in the country, and were even popular.

For my own part, I at first thought them demigods, preferring their manners and appearance at least to all others about me ; and I especially had a high opinion of their learning, on the strength of a considerable library which Sir Harry had collected, though no scholar, and from the young ladies often talking a language I did not understand. For I was always, I know not why, unlike other boys, and very unlike indeed to my elder brothers ; being fond of poring over whatever books I could get, while they sported with Sir Harry, or assisted our father in the superintendence of the farm. But as for me, from a child, I had a sort of world of my own, which I peopled with images of my own fancy ; sometimes grand, sometimes grotesque, sometimes more common-place : making them, however, always to tell stories to myself, which quite satisfied me for the want of other companions ; so that though I was often solitary, I was never alone.

In short, I became a kind of character, for such an urchin, and as I grew up, one of the Miss Goffs, who read poetry, said I was, like poor Edwin,

“ No vulgar boy ;
Deep thought oft seemed to fix my infant eye,
Dainties I heeded not, nor gaude, nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.”

I could myself carry on her comparison with Edwin, which made me not a little proud, for I was certainly,

“ Silent when glad ; affectionate though shy ;
And now my look was most demurely sad ;
And now I laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why :
The neighbours stared and sigh'd, yet blessed the lad ;
Some deem'd him wond'rous wise, and some believ'd him mad.”

One thing indeed inclined my good parents to indulge this quieter disposition of mine. I was the only one of the family who had not strong health. I was even weak in body and limbs, and in these respects inferior to my sturdy brothers ; so I was allowed to lounge with a book under a tree, or in a garden of most antique taste, occupied by a hind who had charge of the old walls of the castle.

The garden itself was more interesting for its said antiquity and wildness than either its beauty or cultivation, for it resembled that described by Virgil, as also belonging to an old hind or gardener :

“ Hic rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum
Lilia verbenasque premens, vescumque papaver.”

The mouldering battlements that surrounded this, to me, interesting spot, were shrouded with elder flowers, and wild honey-

¹ The Minstrel.

² Some scattering pot-herbs here and there he found ;

Which, cultivated with his daily care,

And bruised with vervain, were his frugal fare—DRYDEN.

suckle, but particularly wall-flowers, fed most luxuriantly by the old mould and mortar that filled up the interstices of these "time disparting towers."

To lie under their rough canopy in the morning sun, and pore over such books as I could read, gave me such intense pleasure, that I have never seen these plants since without thinking of that innocent and happy time; so that in after years, when the world had a far different hold of me, I thought Scott must have, in some delightful dream, seen me, when he wrote those descriptive lines:—

"And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honey-suckle loved to crawl,
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all his round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power,"

This disposition of mine to reading began to show itself at a very early age. At five I was tolerably acquainted with Bible history; before nine, with the History of England; and before twelve, had begun to relish poetry;—not in the namby-pamby modern rhymes, such as are castigated by the Mæviad and Baviad, but in the vigorous conceptions and language of real masters:—

"Blind Thamyras, and blind Mæonides,
And Tireseas, and Phineus, prophets old."

By these I mean our own great masters of song, Spencer, Shakespeare, and Milton. These got such possession of me, even as a child, that I never could afterwards relish the more modern, or as I thought them, flatter compositions then in vogue. Hayley, I could not bear, and even Cowper, I am afraid I thought prosaic. I should, however, observe, that I speak of a time when those bursts of the wild afflatus which have warmed our still more modern bards were neither known nor thought of.

It may be asked where I could get the provision for this taste of mine. Our old Grange, to be sure, had a small closet, in which I used to pass an hour sometimes by myself, on account of a few books it contained; but they were only the great Sherborne Bible, a still greater Herbal (much consulted by my mother); and Fox's Martyrs, an account of the rebellion of Forty-five, and Glanville upon witches—much consulted by myself.

The deficiency, however, was made up to me by the good-natured Sir Harry, who, amused and interested with my curiosity and love of reading, similar, he said, to what *his* had been at my age, had a sort of pleasure in fostering it, by allowing me the use of any books I wished in his library.

It was my evident passion for these, I believe, that made Sir

Harry often tell my father he would do well to follow up this inclination of mine for books, by making me a scholar. "That boy," he used to say, "for aught you or I know, may in time be a bishop."

This was not thrown away upon either my father or myself, and I was allowed full liberty in bestowing myself as I pleased in pursuit of study.

In this pursuit I oftentimes, when at fault myself, attacked our curate, Mr. Beardmore, where I hoped for what I did not always find, explanations in matters of history.

He, however, did me some service, by turning me over to his clerk, an old man of the name of Doughty, who, being lame, and a sort of scholar, kept a little children's school, and spent all his spare time in reading Baker's Chronicle, Gwillim's Heraldry, the Pilgrim's Progress, and other compositions of the same classical character. But what made him chiefly valuable to me was, that, from this turn of his, among other things, he knew all about the Cliffords and Bardolfes, who he said were formerly the best gentlemen in the land, only they lost their fortunes when York and Lancaster *came up* (such was his phrase)—in the wars of which, and indeed the older English history in general, he was particularly knowing and voluble.

It was, no doubt, to this early director of my studies that I owe the veneration I have for ancient times, and ancient birth, of course not forgetting my own. For when old Doughty told me these secrets about my ancestors, I felt my heart swell within me, and I sighed, and lamented to think that my father and brothers were reduced almost to follow the plough, instead of leading armies.

The effect of all this, if good, was by no means unmixed with what might be deemed evil. For I contracted such a liking for the old ruins at the Castle, with all its associations, connecting my family with ancient grandeur, that the contrast between that venerable spot, and my father's confined and crowded, though not uncomfortable dwelling, became comparatively disagreeable.

By degrees, too, my frequent brooding over the consequence which I always thought our forefathers had unjustly lost, generated a sort of consequence in myself, child as I was, that contrasted sadly with our present decayed situation; and grief at this produced in me a sensibility of disposition which operated in more ways than one. For I was keenly alive to every thing that partook of high character, and high manners; and was quick in observing and appreciating the difference between persons of polish and education, when I happened to see them (which indeed was but rarely), and compared them with the homeliness of those who yet were my closest relatives.

This made me unhappy, and was a great disadvantage in after life, till experience of the real value of things, and the thought

how little it always is, in comparison with our expectations here, and how absolutely nothing in comparison with what is to come, recovered my too sensitive mind, and "cleansed the foul bosom" of much "perilous stuff."

While my mind and temper were thus early forming, Sir Harry, who had a regard for my father, interested himself about me so much that, at his desire, instead of being apprenticed to some business, as was designed, I was sent to a considerable and well endowed school in the north of Yorkshire, with a view to become a scholar, and taking my chance of what scholarship might procure me by an exhibition at Oxford.

This delighted me, for I lived upon my books; and my master, though of most homely manners, was fully capable of directing me: for though he joined the farmer to the schoolmaster, with a view to cheaper housekeeping, his studies at Queen's College, Oxford, had by no means been thrown away.

Mr. Ebenezer Crackenthorpe (for that was his northern name) was in fact an excellent classic, and though a rough yeoman in appearance, was also an excellent instructor. It was indeed wonderful sometimes to see him come reeking in a frieze coat and mud shoes, from his farm yard, to the schoolroom, to talk (as he did with spirit, and almost enthusiasm) of Homer's heroes, or Horace's rules of life, which he knew as well how to appreciate as any Professor of Oxford or Cambridge, or even a Quarterly or Edinburgh Reviewer.

To this was added instruction in writing, arithmetic, and even, for the upper boys, Euclid; and for all this, together with substantial and healthy, though homely, food, our fathers, some of them ranking among gentlemen, paid twenty pounds a year.

Here I ought, I know, to pause at the threshold of my confessions. For what minion of the world, who measures every thing by expense, or what dandy schoolboy, who measures every thing by fashion, will be willing to look for either profit or improvement to be had for twenty pounds a year? What either of scholarship or knowledge of mankind (the only knowledge perhaps worth having), can be acquired, as all public-school men will exclaim, in the wilds of Yorkshire, among boors and savages?

Yet both the scholastic knowledge and the real manliness of my Cumberland and Yorkshire brethren, in every thing that required it, were at least equal to any hero of Westminster or Eton; though as to early knowledge of the world, if that mean dress and dandyism, getting drunk, or *other* precocious energies, they may, in this, but no other sense, be inferior to those boys who would be men before their time. The intrepidity and assurance, indeed, of modern manners may be sooner acquired; but even that depends so much upon nature, that the difference is trifling; and, as to expense, I have seen as many, perhaps I might say more, unlicked (certainly more

unlaught) cubs come out of the hands of private tutors, who received three hundred a year a piece for them, than I ever remember in the romantic and hardy regions of Sedbergh¹.

To return to my progress at this my homely school, it was, in learning, considerable, and, but for one drawback, would have been so in happiness. My ambition (never great as to anything else) was much gratified in the one; but the content which our simple life might have generated was too much leavened with jealousy of one another's condition, to secure the enjoyment of the other. Most of us were, like myself, sons of decayed or decaying gentlemen, or yeomen, or topping tradesmen in the neighbouring towns; yet we were not without a sprinkling of gentry too, whom the reputation of the school had attracted to it; and with one of these I made a pleasing intimacy, which afterwards had a decided influence on my life.

My friendship, indeed, with Foljambe Hastings, led to what occasioned the most violent crisis, whether of pleasure or pain, which my heart ever knew. By what I thought an extraordinary coincidence, he was the son and heir of the gentleman whom I have mentioned as the owner of the old castle of Bardolfe formerly possessed by my own ancestor, which at once threw a sort of interest about him, and also about me, which no others in the school could feel for one another.

Foljambe Hastings was descended, as his name indicates, from an illustrious family, and his father, one of a very old school, had notions of his own as to education, which, with the reputation of Sedbergh, induced him to place his son there previous to going to Eton, at which a year or two, by way of polishing off the Yorkshire roughness, would, he thought suffice. As he wished him, he said, to be a real English country gentleman, in whose character a sort of sturdy hardihood formed a considerable ingredient, he sought to lay the foundation of it in this plain and homely academy, before he was exposed to the mischiefs of the too high refinement prevalent in higher seminaries.

If he contracted a little rust from blunter companions, it would soon be dissipated, his father thought, in the politer air designed for him later; and meantime to buffet with stout sons of nature would call forth and exercise his own innate powers. He might, to be sure, contract intimacies below his level; but from any thing like real derogation, Mr. Hastings was quite satisfied that his son's sense of his own high blood would always preserve him.

Such was the reasoning of the elder Mr. Hastings when he sent the heir of Foljambe Park to *buffet*, as he said, with the stout yeomen, and sturdy half-gentlemen (among whom I was one), who were laying in their stores of learning at Sedbergh.

¹ Sedbergh, in Yorkshire, was once, and perhaps is still, celebrated for its learning.

But though Foljambe Hastings was in his treatment considered no more than ourselves, in his air and manners he was superior to us all ; so that not only was he regarded with some jealousy himself, but I, whom he distinguished, met with a great deal of it.

At first this surprised me, but in after life I found it was the way of the world. Sturdy as we may be from nature, and as we are taught still more to be by the levellers of the age, we are less inclined to deny, what seem the natural, or, as it were, the legitimate privileges of superior condition, than to rest without grumbling at a leap over our heads by a mere equal.

Thus if Foljambe Hastings was regarded with some little jealousy by our schoolmates, I met with a great deal more, from having no higher pretensions to his preference than any others ;—so that I generally went by the name of the “ would-be-gentleman.”

This hurt me. And yet, barring the inequality of our conditions, every thing pointed to friendship between Foljambe and me : the same age, the same tastes, the same feelings, and sense of right and wrong. In short, we made good the “ *idem velle et idem nolle*,” as forming the basis of a lasting friendship, and not unaptly we sometimes reminded one another of the brotherly love between Milton and Henry Lawes, so celebrated in the beautiful *Lycidas*, which Foljambe seemed to love as well as myself, though both so young.

One would have thought that the enjoyment of a pleasure so pure, so natural, so incapable of hurting any body, and might I not add, so enjoined by the revered author of our religion himself, as friendship, could have given offence to nobody. But not so. The distinction which Foljambe shewed me was deemed an affront by the other boys, and they disliked us both for it ; him, for preferring a mere equal to themselves ; me, for being so preferred. I thought this very hard, but, as I have observed, I afterwards found it was the way of the world.

For some time we were regardless of this ill will, and continued our studies, our walks, and our plays together ; for which, strange to say, we were sent to Coventry by our sulky schoolfellows. Even this we did not much mind, any more than their sneers of unkindness when thrown together with them ; though I own my little reasoning mind set busily to work to ascertain, if it could, from what spice of the devil all this could arise.

At length the ill-will of those who envied us the power of making ourselves happy without them (for this seemed the amount of our crime) broke out into open hostility. There was a lad of the name of Ramshorn, about fifteen years of age, the son of an innkeeper in the neighbourhood, whose father piqued himself on his inn's being avoided by gentlemen, on account of his rudeness. This lad was dull enough at books, but had a swaggering air of vulgar insolence, very terrific to his juniors, whom he belaboured without

mercy, and very hateful to his equals, whom he only did not bully from fear of their turning again. He was vulgar in his looks, vulgar in his mind, vulgar in his dress, in short, vulgar in every thing, and what Shakspeare calls a "proud, shallow, filthy, worsted-stocking knave." Like his father, he was a great stickler for equality of all kinds, which he proved by soundly thrashing all the boys below him who would not do his bidding. This doctrine of equality, however, was so well relished by the school at large, that our lives (Foljambe's and mine) were made uncomfortable by it. For when we appeared together arm and arm, it was thought that we were too proud to associate with the rest; we were laughed at, and a cry of Pylades and Orestes set up in derision; and once, under Ramshorn's directions, we were hissed.

This was beyond bearing, and Foljambe's aristocratic spirit resolved to assert itself, by challenging the Tribune.

I saw the fight, and a desperate one it was. They were pretty equally paired. The Roundhead had the advantage in weight, but the Cavalier in activity. One was the most powerful in bone, the other in muscle. Each seemed resolved to conquer or die: the one to pull down what he hated as a superior, the other to preserve his own position. In short, it seemed almost an epitome of the notable struggles between the Radicals and Conservatives, which I have since lived to witness in the world. The Tribune however had this advantage, that the great majority of those who looked on showed themselves all of his clique, cheering him as their champion at every successful blow, and encouraging him at every thing like a check; while Hastings had nothing but his own spirit, and a sense of his own good cause, on which to rely.

In the end this good cause, and the spirit and blood of Hastings, prevailed; the conquered Ramshorn was led off the ground by his sullen seconds, growling like Polyphemus, and the victor kept possession of the field.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL ADVENTURES.

What news, Lord Bardolfe?
The times are wild: contention, like a horse
Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,
And bears down all before him.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Second Part Henry IV.*

THE next morning, Ramshorn being sufficiently recovered, and Hastings quite fresh, Mr. Crackenthorpe summoned us all to his presence. He was sitting with dignified gravity in his chair of state, high-backed, covered with dark brown leather, and splendid

with brass nails, often admired by his younger disciples. On one side were two or three shelves, containing his Greek and Latin treasures, which he always eyed with complacency; on the other, a small window made on purpose, as a sort of telescope, through which at a glance, as a relaxation from study, he could survey the details of his farm-yard. He had summoned all his gravity to give effect to the oration he had meditated, on the great breach of the peace which had been committed. On his right hand, and in a lower chair, sat his assistant, Mr. Thornthwaite, as a sort of puisne judge on the important occasion. The culprits, and all the rest, stood mute and anxiously around; so that, notwithstanding my fright, it reminded me of my Ovid, which I had that very day to construe—

Considerere duces et vulgi
Stante corona.

Mr. Crackenthorpe having first, as a just man, asked the cause of the quarrel, and been answered by Ramshorn, that Foljambe had insulted him, the pedagogue replied, in his broad Cumberland dialect, “Yoong lad, take care what thou say’st; Mr. Fooljamb Hastings is a gentleman, and a gentleman never insoolts any one. But I thought,” continued the pedagogue, “and I had hoped, that where all were so coomfortable as ye are with me, ye would all be civil to one another, and live in peace, and it is my duty to poonish those who will not.”

At this he brandished a rod, which, like the fasces of a Roman consul, lay before him on the table, adding much to his dignity in adding to his power. He went on thus :

“Before I proceed to the *ratio ultima*, which you all know means, Anglice, condign punishment, and vulgarly, a good flogging, I must know the particulars, and require to be told wherein the insult, which Ramshorn says he received from Fooljambe, consisted.”

Ramshorn (rather, what is called in common language, dumb-founded) could allege no insult on the part of his adversary, except that he was so proud that he would not associate with the boys in general, but chose to keep aloof, with one or two favourites, myself for one.

“Take care again, lad,” said Mr. Crackenthorpe : “for thou convictest thyself. *Noscitur a socio* is a true proverb. His choice of a friend shews he is no ways proud at all; and at any rate, it is no insult.”

To this Mr. Thornthwaite gave a grave assent, and the principal, still requiring to know more of the story, and finding that the challenge given by Foljambe was the consequence of the gratuitous annoyance of Ramshorn by hissing, he determined that the Tribune

had been guilty of a gross abuse of the liberty he advocated, and deserved punishment, which should certainly be inflicted, unless he confessed himself in the wrong, made an apology, and promised to keep the peace in future.

This the gallant Ramshorn positively refused, which called forth all the energies, as well as ire, of the judge, who was proceeding to corporal chastisement, which the Tribune even made a show of resisting; for he retired among the other boys, calling upon them to join in defending him.

He however mistook his man, in supposing this would intimidate the monarch. Crackenthorpe was a man of nerve, and though remarkable for affability, and even a jollity of manner when unopposed, was a determined supporter of all lawful authority, more especially his own.

Ramshorn's punishment, therefore, was only the more severe on account of this additional crime, of an attempt at rebellion against legitimate power. The insulted master seized him with a strong hand; and while his usher, Thornthwaite, acted as a corps of observation in regard to the rest of the school, inflicted a powerful castigation in blows and stripes, from which the culprit in vain endeavoured to escape.

Bursting with spleen, he was then confined to his room, and we were all dismissed, appalled with what we had witnessed, and awfully impressed with the veneration due to lawful authority, and particularly to that of the schoolmaster of Sedbergh.

My reasoning powers were much busied by this scene, and especially with what followed; for Ramshorn, having contrived to break prison, went home to his father, the innkeeper, who came the next day with his attorney, Mr. Capias, to call the tyrant, as he termed him, to account; threatened the vengeance of the law, and insisted upon taking his boy from the school.

The attorney, not to be wanting on his part, began questioning (or, as Crackenthorpe afterwards said, "poomping" him), to know whether he admitted, what he called, the gross assault which had been perpetrated on the innocent boy?

"I deny the *perpetrating*, and particularly deny the innocence," said the master of birch and etymology, "but I admit flogging the young rebel, as I would both of you if you were my scholars, and offended against the rules of my school."

Mr. Crackenthorpe uttered this with what we thought astonishing firmness, particularly when he added, "as for law, two can play at that; for if the law does not support schoolmasters, it will soon not support the king, and then there will be no law at all. Then as to removing the boy, I am sorry to tell thee, it is not in thy power, for I have myself already, not removed, but expelled him. Mr. Thornthwaite, reach me down the book of entries."

At this he opened the ponderous record of the transactions, civil and criminal, of the free school of Sedbergh, and showed, to the indignation of the democratic Boniface, the following note, in ink scarcely dry, against his son's name in the list of scholars :

“ Propter contumaciam, et rebellionem contra scholæ disciplinam—Expulsus.”

At first the innkeeper stared, and not understanding Latin, wondered how a few unintelligible words, like magic, could prevent him, as Crackenthorpe had said, from using the power of removing his own boy from such thralldom ; but, upon being informed that he was expelled by the master's own act, and for rebellion against his authority, he said it was a damned country, and not worth living in, where any man, or body of men, had such power. He was consoled, however, by Mr. Capias telling him that such palpable tyranny, added to such a cruel assault, would greatly enhance the damages in an action at law. This he ordered the said Capias forthwith to commence, and they sullenly took their leave.

The result was, a verdict for the defendant at the next assizes, the plaintiff being condemned to pay the costs, and another action by Capias against his principal for not paying them.

CHAPTER III.

MORE OF SCHOOL DAYS.—MY FRIENDSHIPS, PLEASURES, OCCUPATIONS.

Welcome hither,

If that the youth of my new interest here,
Have power to bid you welcome.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Merch. of Venice*.

THE preceding incident was by far the most important hitherto of my life, and set my thoughts at work in greater activity than ever.

I began to speculate on the nature of right and wrong ; of government and rebellion ; of friendship, jealousy, envy, and hatred ; in short, I became as great a moral philosopher as any young gentleman of fifteen could be.

In this I was joined *con amore* by Hastings. The friendship which had united us from taste had been drawn closer by this adventure, and this in itself formed another object of inquiry for our inquisitive minds, involving no less a question than the principles of human nature, and the equality of mankind. For this Hastings was a great stickler, notwithstanding his high lot, and his burst against Ramshorn ; and when I observed upon the indignation he had shown against that rebel, as incompatible with his principle, he justified himself by saying that he fought him for his imper-

tinence, to which equality gave no right; that he was by nature what he called a *raff*, and detestable on that account, but not for his lower rank.

To these sentiments I deferred with admiration, and still more, when upon my hinting a fear of interruption hereafter to our friendship, from the difference of our situations, he assured me that friendship depended upon similarity of feeling, not of fortune—the thing was impossible.

Oh! how I loved him for this, and more than ever admired his elegant aristocratic look of superiority, and as it were, of fashion (though of that I then knew nothing), when accompanied and set off by such beautiful sentiments!

Foljambe had, however, a most extraordinary warmth and vigour in all his thoughts and conceptions, whatever they were, and whether in opinions, feelings, or conduct, could never be neutral. His regard for me seemed a passion, especially after the attempt to thwart it in the school, and he more than once said, that if ever he came into possession of Bardolfe Castle, he would make it over to me as one of its rightful heirs. Could I help loving him?

Our school discipline proceeded, and I hope I may say with profit. The mightiest of schoolmasters or (as he loved to be called), the Archi Didaskalos of Yorkshire, viewed our progress with pleasure, and I must do him the justice to say, he was as willing as able to promote it.

Being so young, our inquisitiveness about every thing, but particularly as to the operations of the mind, made him call us moral philosophers in embryo; and on me in particular, from a warm eulogy I pronounced upon Socrates, in one of our themes, he bestowed the name of that illustrious person. This, whether from derision or envy, was converted into a nickname, which stuck by me at school, and followed me to college.

With all the drawbacks, however, which I have mentioned, Sedbergh was to me a place of happiness, unequalled by any other which afterwards cherished me. The acquisition, or at least the foundation, of those stores for the mind, which education gives, and which produce a proud equality, often a superiority, in him who possesses them to the owners of millions without them; the cultivation of a friendship, that balm of comfort to all, but especially to a decayed gentleman, and which I was sure would last for ever; the hopes, the frolics, and even the carelessness of youth, which never looks gloomily on futurity, and always possesses in idea whatever it chooses to wish for; all these were enjoyments, not the less felt, because perhaps, at the time, not well understood.

But there were others of a more distinct and commoner character (and sadly, on that very account, undervalued), which it is still a delight to me to remember. Yet are they what many fine, though

generally upstart, people might characterize as rude and vulgar. The pleasure, however, which we take in them is nothing but natural, for they are nature's pleasures. I mean such as arise from our supposed ability to supply our own natural wants.

Hence my satisfaction in digging a few feet of earth, dignified with the name of garden, and pleasing my imagination by its elegance, or its actual profit from culinary produce.

What delight I experienced from adding a bunch of radishes, or a plate of mustard and cress of my own raising, to our coarse, but well-relished supper! It realized what I had perhaps read in the morning in my Virgil, of the old Corycian :—

“ Regum æquabat opes animis, seraque revertens
Nocte domum, dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis ! ”

Were the ambitious pursuits of the world that engaged me afterwards more happy? I fear to answer.

That I may not however describe myself a mere hungry peasant, alive only to bodily sense, let me mix a little sentiment with my enjoyments—for sentimental I had become in no small degree.

My garden pleased me more from the gold and velvet, with which nature (dear and elegant nature) clothed its crocus, its wall-flower, and

“ Polyanthus of unnumbered dyes,
The yellow wall-flower stained with iron brown,”

than even the luxuries of the evening banquet. How little, I said even then, do such pleasures depend upon; how superior indeed are they to all that wealth (of which however I had none to make the comparison) can command!

With this garden I felt fully equal to my richer friend. My delight was also in the heat of the day to lie, Horace in hand, at the foot of a great elm, that stood before the school-house door, and with him, proud of my classics, to exclaim,

“ Libet jacere, modo sub antiqua ilice,
“ Modo in tenaci gramine.”

But on the approach of evening, happiness was perfect, when I wandered down a romantic dell, listening to the call, not of earliest, but latest birds, nestling for the night in the green and perfumed hedges. There I always lingered, with I know not what fantasies, except that they were always pleasing, until I was lost in twilight, and the school curfew summoned me to my own nest.

These simple scenes, and the reflections they prompted, all sooth-

¹ How execrably translated by Dryden, though he was “ glorious John.”

“ For late returning home he slept at ease,
And wisely deemed the wealth of monarchs less,
The little of his own, because his own did please.”

ing to a mind vividly sensible to the charms of nature, were deliciously enhanced by my now for the first time meeting with the "Minstrel."

O! how I devoured its descriptions, particularly one stanza which I thought ought to be written in gold—certainly, in my then frame of mind, it was golden to me.

"Oh how canst thou renounce the boundless store,
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields;
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!"

Perhaps all this may be uninteresting to the bulk of those who may open these memoirs; perhaps I may be laughed at—no matter, let them laugh that win.

The impressions of this sort of poetry, combined with the habits I have described, are almost as green as ever in my recollection, though at the distance of nearly half a century. The ramage of the birds is still in my ears, and still a feast to my memory, for the world has scarcely deadened it, though the sense itself is gone.

But it is only in "the morn and liquid dew of youth" that we can taste the true flavour of this ambrosial food.

CHAPTER IV.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

O! when my eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Twelfth Night*.

Fair Excellence, if, as your form declares,
You are divine, be pleased to instruct me,
How you will be worshipt.

DRYDEN'S *Tempest*.

THE pleasures I have described were always shared by Hastings, who seemed to enjoy them at least as much as myself; so that we talked sentiment by the hour, upon the nothingness of ambition, and the inanities of the world. Friendship, we both agreed, was the only real good, and this we really enjoyed.

Judge then my grief, when his father having, as he thought, sufficiently trained him in the *simplicities* of life, now held it necessary to initiate him in the mysteries of that higher society to

which he naturally belonged, and in which he was hereafter to move. Foljambe therefore announced to me, with emotions certainly of regret, though not unmingled with satisfaction, that he was to remove directly to Eton, his father's chariot and four having in fact been sent for him; and he leaped into it, as I thought, with too much alacrity; though perhaps I thus felt, only because, while he drove off in all the gaiety of hope and expectation, I was left at Sedbergh, a solitary boor.

The contrast indeed between me, the son of a mere yeoman, or if a gentleman, a decayed one, who knew not where he was to look for fortune, and this young heir, who had the whole world before him, and who had thus left me friendless behind, gave me a pang which I did not soon recover. I moped, and sought out the darkest corners, in which to hide tears which I actually shed, but of which I am now ashamed; for I am afraid they sprang from a double motive; one, far less worthy than the other. For though I certainly grieved for the loss of my friend, the contrast I have mentioned, between his brilliant prospect and my own, struck me with double force. I railed at the inequalities of fortune, and (let me confess my weakness) it made me almost repine, not only that I too was not destined to Eton, but that I could not also proceed there in a chariot and four.—So much for *Socrates*!

I consoled myself, however, as all persons who are proud, but whose fortune does not square with the good opinion they have of themselves, generally do, with the assurance that if I was not as rich and great as Foljambe, I deserved to be so, and that in truth he had never given me reason to distrust that he thought so himself. Thus I long felt with delight the pressure of his hand in mine when we parted, and his assurance that Eton, or new companions, would never make him forget Sedbergh, or me, still dwelt upon my ear.

Hastings had often asked why we should not go through the world together, as we had through the school? talked warmly of my coming to see him in vacation at Foljambe Park; and of our meeting again at College, if I obtained (of which he had no doubt) the exhibition at Queen's College, which was annexed to Sedbergh, and which enabled the holder to pursue an Oxford education.

These were delightful dreams, and my love for Foljambe was only increased by the thought how totally he was without the least alloy of that pride which often makes unequal friendships so miserable.

All this redoubled my exertion in study, as the only mode of realizing a dream so charming. The days therefore passed on, busily, if not happily; and the energy of the *Iliad*, and my keen interest about its heroes, brought me rapidly on in Greek.

At the same time I made an advance (or something like it) of

another kind. For Mrs. Crackenthorpe, who added a prolific nature to her other good qualities as a wife, had bestowed upon her husband no less than four daughters, crimson as peonies, full of health and buttermilk; and these buxom females, always flitting about me, laid hold of my young imagination in a manner I did not understand. They were homely enough, but still they were females, and though not above sixteen, I began even at that age to think of the other sex as beings far different from our own, in the respect due to them, and the interest which in me, I knew not why, they always created.

Yet in regard to these Misses Crackenthorpe, the feeling, though it shewed me what I was made of, was not dangerous. Even at that young age, though I liked a game of romps, in which a sort of Galatea coquetry was very well understood between us¹, I felt the want of something more symmetrical in form, something more delicate in manner, than these female beefeaters exhibited. They had all thick ankles, large feet, and red elbows, and though the seeing them roll sometimes in the hayfield, which disclosed these charms, was excellent amusement, they luckily proved antidotes instead of attractions.

In short, I was no Spartan, and never could bear a grenadier in petticoats.

I now went home for a vacation, but I was unluckily not too happy at home. My fondness for books, and the remembrance of Foljambe's friendship, did not add to its attractions. I loved my plain father and mother, and I respected (perhaps sometimes envied) the strong nerves and brawny limbs of my brothers. And to do them justice, they did not seem to despise *me*, though I was neither a farmer nor a sportsman; but I preferred the old castle gardens, or the library of Sir Harry's Hall house, which were still open to me, to inspecting a mow, or attending a market.

My brothers generally honoured me with the sobriquet of "t'young doctor²." But as this was the extent of their disparagement and their wit, I consoled myself with looking forward to the return of my friend from Eton, and the promised summons, consequent thereon, to Foljambe Park.

In this I was for a long time bitterly disappointed. The vacations of Eton and Sedbergh seldom tallied; so that though I twice received the longed-for invitation, the interdictions of my father and Crackenthorpe prevented my accepting it. During the whole of one Christmas, when we were both at home, I was made prisoner by illness, and during another, Foljambe himself was absent in London. Thus, I had entirely finished my school course, and was on the eve

¹ Malo me petit Galatea lasciva puella.

² A provincial contraction in Yorkshire for "the young."

of my eighteenth birthday, before such an arrangement could be made as permitted me to enjoy this long-expected visit.

Meantime I had obtained the exhibition for which I was a candidate, and which, eked out by a small allowance which my father was able to make, was to send me on the foundation to Queen's College, at Oxford, a consummation for which I was devoutly preparing, when the long-delayed summons to pass a few days with Hastings at his father's arrived, and was eagerly accepted. I say eagerly, because, inexperienced as I was as to manners, or a way of life different from that I was accustomed to at home, or at best at the Hall Place, I was not in the least uneasy at the thought of presenting myself to my friend's family, superior as I knew them to be. Behold me, therefore, with a heart beating high with happy expectation, on the road to the promised land.

On my arrival, I found my friend waiting for me before some great gates, which seemed to belong to a fortified town, rather than a park, and led through an avenue of half-a-mile to his paternal mansion. He was glad to see me, though he was quieter in his demonstrations of it than I had expected, and a great deal quieter than myself. For I leaped into his arms, and embraced him with fervour, nay, even with tears.

This rather surprised him, for we had both advanced comparatively towards manhood since we parted, and I question if my friend, who had also been emancipated from Eton, thought he had any farther advance to make to complete his title to the *toga virilis*. He returned the embrace, but shed no tears—he had, as I thought, too much self-possession, and talked rather quizzingly of my Yorkshire heartiness.

This, however, a more fashionable coat, and what I supposed a more fashionable, that is, rather a less natural, manner than had belonged to him in the wilds of Sedbergh, were the only differences which Eton and absence seemed to have produced. In all other respects, he appeared the same warm, friendly fellow he had been ; and in the eagerness of our mutual inquiries, and the joy of meeting again, we forgot, if either had remembered, the difference in lot which subsisted between the squire's and the decayed gentleman's son.

I have, however, more reasons for remembering this epoch. In proceeding up the avenue, something sped towards us which at first I took for a young fawn, so swift was its motion, so graceful its bound. It appeared of the air, for it seemed not earthly. What was my surprise, when, advancing nearer, I plainly observed it was a young human being, for it had a human form, and a face dazzling with animation : and yet not human either ; for it was more like one of the fairies I had read of, and if so, surely of fairies the queen herself.

Foljambe, seeing my surprise, said, "It is my sister Bertha : she has not seen me to-day, and is impatient to join me. I dare say she has played truant from her governess to do so."

By this time the graceful girl, in all the bloom and vivacity of sweet sixteen, had come up to us, and playfully reproached Foljambe for going out without as usual coming to see her. Her playfulness, however, fled when I was presented to her ; and the necessity for the artificial ceremonial she had been taught on the salutation of a stranger seemed to put her natural frankness to flight ; she was seized with timidity ; curtesied, hesitated, and blushed. That blush, however, spoke, though her voice had stopt ; yet, in the few words she had uttered, that voice was so silvery sweet as to affect me with I knew not what sensations of pleasure, for I knew not why I was so pleased. All that I was certain of was, that it was a voice more sweet than I had ever heard before (and certainly than I ever heard afterwards, except from her)—so that I was almost about to exclaim,

"O, lady ! speak again."

But the blush spoke too ; and I could translate it, though new to the language of blushes. It seemed to say, among other things, "And is this your friend?" and then I thought I was an object of curiosity, and wished to appear to advantage to my friend's sister, but did not know how—and then I blushed in my turn, yet did not know why—only I was sure that I had never seen such a blush, and would have given the world to have had such a sister.

I was very fond of Dryden's *Tempest*, and a favourite passage rushed into my mind, personified as I felt by this beautiful vision—

"At first it stared upon me and seem'd wild,
And then I trembled ; yet it looked so lovely,
That when I would have fled away, my feet
Seem'd fasten'd to the ground."

This never happened to me with the Misses Crackenthorpe, nor even with the Misses Goff, nor could I then analyze the difference ; but I felt it in my heart—where, truth to say, it remained ever afterwards.

We now advanced to the house, which had an imposing look of opulence and substantial grandeur ; and this, and the grace and beauty of the young fairy, made my mind dart with sensible mortification to my own parental home, and my own personal insignificance.

That this should be inspired by a fine house and park, and a sort of consequent reverence for the owner, was not surprising. What did surprise me was, that not one-half, nay not a tenth part, of my fear or mortification arose from this, but from a feeling totally new, springing from the sudden comparison of myself with this daughter of rank and fortune, whom I had just seen.

That her loveliness should make me love her, I could understand ; but why I should feel the complex sensations of awe, humility, and despair, which so instantly got possession of me, was at the time totally inexplicable.

I accounted for it, Heaven knows, well enough afterwards, when, to my cost, I got better acquainted with the nature of love, pride, ambition, and independence, all struggling together ; but this was the result of riper years. What now puzzled me was the influence which this wild young beauty, high as she was above me, could have acquired in such an instant, so as to make me feel bashful, helpless, and humbled, and all, as I thought, without a cause.

But to return—my friend Foljambe, still accompanied by his sister, conducted me across a large hall, into a large room, where a large and very noble looking man sat in a large arm-chair of crimson velvet.

“ Father,” said Foljambe, with a sort of flippancy, which my jealousy did not like, because I attributed it to Eton, “ this is my friend Clifford : I assure you, though he looks so bashful and backward, there is a great deal in him.”

“ Of course,” said Mr. Hastings, “ as he was your friend at Sedbergh. He has at least an honourable name ; though that perhaps is little recommendation in these days. I believe, young Sir (that is, my son tells me), you descend from the old Lords Bardolfe, as well as the Cliffords, for whom I ought myself to feel an interest, from being an unworthy successor to part of their domains. Though the domains have been lost, I hope you don’t undervalue descent, as it is becoming a fashion to do. Possibly, indeed, it will be of little use to you in the world ; and yet I don’t know——.”

At this he fell into a sort of musing, while I was absorbed with what seemed an interest taken by his daughter in this introductory speech. For she watched her father with peculiar attention while he made it, and during his reverie afterwards. Of this reverie, at the time, I knew not the cause, and even when I did, did not perhaps well understand it ; for I knew nothing of English aristocrats or democrats, though my school books had already taught me the difference between them among the ancients ; and certainly I soon found that the awful master of Foljambe Park, though, from peculiar views, he had mixed the hardihood of a plebeian with an aristocratic education for his son, was, in his principles, certainly no democrat.

He was, as I have before stated, of the old school, and he was so in dress, and *address*. As to the first, it was so different from any I had hitherto seen, that it made an impression, as indeed every thing about and belonging to him did, upon one so total a stranger to his higher lot. I remember even his coat, which had a very low collar, was of a light stone colour ; single-breasted, and very plain :

but its plainness was relieved by a most magnificent waistcoat of crimson velvet, with gold button-holes, denoting, as I thought, uncommon grandeur. Its pockets reached nearly to his knees, large and roomy, and out of them he ever and anon conveyed, and returned to them again, a ponderous gold chased snuff-box, of large dimensions. This seemed the perpetual employment of his slender hands, whose whiteness and delicacy shewed how little they had ever been exposed even to the sun, much less to toil.

A small head, with a keen blue eye, and bushy eyebrows, gave him a penetrating, or at least a pensive, look, and a black solitaire, and little bag, or rather rosette, in which he confined his grey hair, completed the outward man.

When he rose from his chair, which he did, with a sort of condescending politeness, I perceived that his figure was tall, commanding, and well proportioned. Upon the whole, he had an imposing and dignified air. How much of this was owing to my consciousness of his superior station, how much to his personal merits, I did not discover, for I was too much dazzled with the first real man of quality I had ever seen to think of inquiring.

He was engaged, on our entering, in a conversation, which was afterwards resumed, and what I heard, I did not fail, because sufficiently characteristic, to remark and remember. It was with a gentleman, who, though the clergyman of the parish, rather surprised me by the obsequiousness he shewed; for it was very unlike the manner of our own curate, who always, on his visits to us, seemed at his ease, and as perfectly at home as one of ourselves.

This gentleman, the Reverend Mr. Darling, was giving an account of a splendid ball and supper, given by a Mr. Wilkins, one of the *nouveaux riches*, who had lately settled in a fine modern house in the neighbourhood.

“Were there many of the old families?” asked Mr. Hastings.

“All but your own,” replied the minister, with a bow; “there were Lord Conyers, the Dowager Lady Belfont, and all her young ladies.”

“Very extraordinary,” observed Mr. Hastings, handling his snuff-box with something like agitation. “Why, they tell me all this fortune was made by usury, and inveigling young heirs at sixty per cent.; so that they have christened his fine house Annuity Hall. They say, too, that the foundation even of this arose out of speculations in tallow. What astonishes me is, that he is already in the Commission, and they even talk of him as a Deputy Lieutenant. What shall we come to if this goes on? I trust, however, the gentry of Yorkshire are not yet so reduced.”

He said this with some bitterness, and an increased gravity of look; while Mr. Darling replied with a titter, only repressed by the presence he was in, which made him afraid to venture a joke,

“ There certainly was no tallow at Mount Wilkins, for such a profusion of wax candles I never saw.”

“ I am really sorry,” returned the high squire. “ What all this deference for mere wealth, no matter how got, may lead to in society, I don’t know. An honest citizen, enriched by successful industry, one might respect, but what are we to say when a dealer in tallow and usury is not disdained by such a name as Lord Conyers, or such a noble person as Lady Belfont?”

“ Lady Belfont,” said Mr. Darling, again smiling, “ has six daughters, some of them waxing old ; Mount Wilkins is a fine place, and Mr. Wilkins himself, though so rich, is scarcely yet past his meridian.”

“ If that is the reason,” returned Mr. Hastings, with sternness, “ so much the worse ;” and he again had recourse to his box, and became indeed so thoughtful, that Mr. Darling, with great deference, took his leave.

What had passed only increased my humility before this (to me) august person. It is certain that I never before thought myself in so awful a presence, or so strongly felt the rush of emotions of different kinds which filled my heart. The modern grandee, before whom I stood, by his gravity of look, and the sort of solemnity of voice in which he uttered his sentences, created in me a respect so profound, that I scarcely ventured to look up ; but the animated sylph who stood beside him threw such expression into a complexion of breathing roses, and eyes which seemed absolutely to laugh, that fear would have been lost in reciprocal buoyancy and gladness, had her father been away, or had I been any other than the humble creature I felt myself.

I never thought of my inferiority of lot to any one before ; I had not been dazzled by Sir Harry, or his ladies, or their Hall house, though also a fine place. What did impress me, was the long, long distance which seemed to intervene between my condition and that of the family I was now in, and especially of the lovely creature who had so instantly won me.

All this was far different from the Goffs. In them, though rich enough, I saw little of what I thought personal superiority ; but in Mr. Hastings, though without a title, I beheld a man who boasted, or at least felt, that he had blood in his veins equal to the highest and most ancient in the kingdom. That blood was in itself a source of elevation equal to the most splendid title that could be conferred upon him. He cared not for honours, and had notions of his own concerning them ; for he was fond of the saying, that though the king could make a duke, he could not make a gentleman.

It was hence that, intrenched in his family seat, from which he seldom stirred, and always substituting George III. for Elizabeth, he thought “ the old courtier of the queen” (allowing a little for

the difference of manners) a model character for an English country gentleman. Hence the plan I have noticed for the early education of his son; and hence, too, his aversion to those of his neighbours who lived at such places as Mount Wilkins, and whom he contemptuously called the *nouveaux riches*.

In one respect, however, although Mr. Hastings was any thing but belonging to these as a class, he did not disdain to owe much of his fortune to the same sources of wealth as theirs; for it was derived from a wealthy ancestor, who, in the time of Charles II., held a proprietary government in one of the colonies, and had invested successfully immense sums in plantations in Barbadoes. These, however, were all managed by agents; he seemed to have nothing to do with them except to receive their proceeds, which he did to a very considerable amount, and hence the grandeur that surrounded him, for the estate of Foljambe, after abstracting the house and park, was by no means large.

With all his grandeur, however, and though he gave way to it, he was a man, as I afterwards found, deeply imbued with religion, at least according to his own notion of it; and though towards his fellow-creatures he was sufficiently distant, before his God he was the humblest of men, and so impressed with the final justice of Providence, that he was full of fears lest the prosperity he enjoyed in his fortune and his children, and the pride he took in both, should be one day severely visited. No more, he would say, than he should deserve. Thus, by what seems an inconsistency in his character, his happiness was by no means without alloy.

It may be supposed that this knowledge of Mr. Hastings arose from after discoveries of mine, and could not be discerned on a first acquaintance by a youth of eighteen. Nevertheless, I was sufficiently struck with the difference between his real and high gentility, and the common demeanour to which I had been accustomed; and when he shook my hand, and said, he was glad to see his son's favourite friend and schoolfellow, and not the less for being a Clifford and a Bardolfe, who were of the true old nobility, I own I felt a timidity mixed with elation at this, which I had never experienced before Sir Harry or Crackenthorpe,—the only great men I had ever yet encountered.

This feeling was, however, mingled with another of a pleasanter nature; for the graceful girl, who had so dazzled me when greeting her brother, had laid hold of her father's hand, and under that protection seemed not unwilling to meet my eye, while her's surveyed me with a modest freedom which she had not hitherto ventured upon; and when her father pronounced the words "his son's favourite friend, and a Clifford and a Bardolfe," she seemed pleased, and proved it with a smile, the radiancy of which, through ten

thousand vicissitudes which have happened since, has dwelt in my memory with unremitting intenseness.

What forcibly struck me was, the fond deference and attachment combined which Bertha shewed to her father, for every kind word he spoke, and every approving smile he gave her; which were not a few, for she seemed his darling. Indeed, with all his reserve of manner to every one else, his children seemed both of them the prime objects of his interest, in shewing which he was pleasingly tender and confiding.

Still I was miserably conscious of my inferiority to the whole family, but particularly when I looked at the elegance as well as bloom of Bertha. Bloom I had seen, but never that fascination of manner, which, though I had been hitherto a stranger to it, seemed in her no more than natural, and to have been born with her. This was all heightened by the evident superiority of everything that surrounded her.

Had she been a farmer's daughter, or even Sir Harry's, I might have been at my ease, or at least have indulged in fearless admiration. But here that admiration was at once accompanied by a sense of despair, as astonishing as it was unaccountable.

I looked at her as a being of higher order, such as was unapproachable by *me*, or at least such as I never dared approach. All about her—her aspect, her ease, and even her attire, light, airy, and elegant—attracted me in a manner I cannot describe. Surely in simple and natural elegance Bertha excelled all others of her delightful age and sex, and it formed, of her outward appearance, the most engaging charm.

But, as I have said, all about her conspired to fill me with humility as well as interest. Even the furniture of the room (at which, that she seemed so much at home with it, I was booby enough to be surprised), its ornaments, gilding, musical instruments, and family pictures, seemed to bespeak a greatness, and consequence, such as I had no business with. There was palpably a distance between us, which, come what might, I felt could never be surmounted.

But if these were the feelings occasioned by the comparison of myself with the daughter of an untitled though rich and high-born English gentleman, how were they heightened, when I accidentally discovered that Bertha's maternal descent was still more illustrious than her paternal. I say accidentally, because it arose from a few words casually dropt by her maid, Mrs. Margaret, who thought fit to tell me sometimes I was a nice gentleman, and to do the honours of particular parts of the place, which she might find me admiring alone. A summer-house in the garden was one of these, over the portico of which I was struck with two coats of

arms in marble, on two shields joined together, seemingly of fifty quarterings each; but, surmounting one of them, my attention was most arrested by a crown—a foreign one indeed, but still a crown.

“Ah!” said Mrs. Margaret, “I see you don’t know what that is; but these are the family arms; that on the left is master’s, and they say he comes from the old kings of England; but that on the right, with a crown upon it, was my lady’s, because in Germany the princesses wear crowns.”

“Was your late lady then a princess?” asked I, in astonishment.

“What, did you not know that?” asked Mrs. Margaret. “I thought Mr. Charles must have told you all about that.”

“And pray, of what family?”

“Why I can hardly tell it, the word is so hard, but it is something about sacks and ice, as they tell me, and they say the princess, my lady, was a relation of a great many kings and queens.”

Shall I own, this surprising intelligence gave me no pleasure, for it only increased the awe I already felt, in too great a degree for my comfort, for Bertha and her relations. I wished to ask Foljambe to explain it to me, but as he had never mentioned the subject, I did not dare, till a second visit to the summer-house, and the sight of the arms in his company brought it on. Being herald enough, from only old Doughty’s instructions, to make the observation, I said to him, without alluding to Margaret’s information,

“I see that, great as your family is, you have had alliances with still greater rank, for the arms and the crown in that second shield denote something, if not royal, at least very near it.”

“Did you not know,” said he, “that my mother claimed to be a princess of the empire, from being one of the Ducal House of Saxe Eisenach?”

This at once solved Mrs. Margaret’s difficulty about sacks and ice, but I still held my peace as to her information, and Foljambe went on;

“To be sure she was a confounded poor one; her grandfather, though a sovereign, being only a general officer, receiving pay in the service of Prussia. My father met her at Berlin, when on his travels: they fell in love with each other, and he offered. But though she had not a stiver, and he was rich and in full possession, her father the prince, as he was called, would not listen to it, till mine proved that he came from the Plantagenets, and bore forty-eight quarterings—three times as many as the prince required.”

“Did you know your mother?” asked I.

“Not much, for she died when I was ten years old; but she was very handsome, and very proud, and often told me and Bertha to remember that we had kings and emperors for our ancestors, *in Germany*. The Vater land, I should observe (I suppose on that

account), was always preferred to England in her estimation. However, let me not disparage her highness, for she loved my father, and made him very happy, as well as her very humble servant ; for it is astonishing, they say, what an influence she had over him, making him do whatever she pleased ;—for the governor is a good, high-minded fellow, but the will of this scion of a sovereign house was to him always law.”

Here our conversation ended, and it left me only in a worse plight than ever in regard to my feeling of inferiority, to which I was so much alive.

The flourishing descendants, though remote, of the Plantagenets, were far too high for a decayed gentleman to think of as friends ; but how was the distance increased by their being only one generation from a duke and reigning sovereign !

In truth, the discovery, though with no very definite reason for it, filled me with dismay.

CHAPTER V.

MY GRIEF AT QUITTING FOLJAMBE PARK.

Here, from Verona, art thou banished.
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

* * * * *

There is no world without Verona's walls.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Rom. and Juliet.*

LET better casuists explain, if they can, how all I have related could spring up in the mind of a lad so young, wholly new to life, and whose companions had been comparatively clowns.

But so it was ; though dazzled and delighted with the lovely vision of Bertha, my feeling was that of distress, to think how out of my place I was in suffering myself to contemplate it. I thought I could have died for her ; and if she would command me tasks, could have gone to the world's end to execute them. In short, I felt like Miranda,—

“ To be your fellow
You may deny me ; but I'll be your servant
Whether you will or no.”

The event was, as I dare say the reader has anticipated ; I discovered that I had a heart, and lost it in the moment of the discovery. It, however, had an effect upon me afterwards, which I ought to record.

Far from wearing out, these first impressions only gained strength, as I grew more acquainted with Bertha, and the surprise at my new situation diminished. The grave deportment of her father, indeed,

did not much relax, and at first I thought he had put some constraint upon himself, in giving such opportunity for an increase of intimacy between his son and a person so much below him ; and yet the respect he always expressed, at least for my name, consoled me.

The history of our broken family was the better known to Mr. Hastings, from the circumstance of his own having been long the possessors of this ancient castle and demesne, which made him study their former lives. He knew more about them than even old Doughty, and once told me, with great complacency, that my ancestor John, third Lord Bardolfe, had been a most distinguished soldier, and even knight banneret under the chivalrous Edward III. I observed, or thought I did, that upon these occasions his daughter seemed not without a participation of the interest which her father took in the subject.

These little incidents sometimes re-assured me in respect to Mr. Hastings, whom I began to like as well as to fear ; but my natural jealousy was not without alarm in regard to his son. Not that he was so much the enthusiast of pedigree as of more modern feelings, in his impressions regarding high stations, fashion, and title, in which he did not resemble his father, whose pride seemed confined to the pride of birth.

It is certain that the great burst of feeling while at Sedbergh, which I have recorded, relative to the equality of mankind, and the perfect indifference as to situation which ought to prevail between friends, seemed somewhat to have evaporated in the atmosphere of Eton ; and, though I observed no change in his treatment, yet it was evident that he had not resided two or three years in that courtly place for nothing. The notice taken of the scholars by the king had not been lost upon him, and the friends he had made there were very different in degree from his companions in North Yorkshire. The Marquis of Albany, and Sir Harry Melford, of whom he was fond of talking, were any thing but the sons of decayed gentlemen.

I watched this, as I have said, with something like jealousy ; but as I was his only companion, and he was both cheerful and naturally open, even jealousy had no fault to find ; so that my love for him continued to indulge itself unrestrained, spite of a little quizzing, when growing, as he said I was, sentimental.

But Bertha, ever cheerful, ever animated, with a countenance all radiance, and a tongue all nature, seemed not to have a thought to conceal. Completely unsophisticated, she admitted me frankly as a sharer with her brother in all her occupations, whether grave or gay, of study, or diversion. I was allowed to ride, read, and walk with her, to hear her play and sing, to tell her stories, and listen to hers in return.

But it was Shakspeare that most promoted our intimacy. I had

been fixed by his historical plays, even in my infancy, probably from the interest I took in Lord Bardolfe, Clifford, and York and Lancaster; and this had produced an admiration and love for his other wonder-moving works; so that, for my age, I was tolerably proficient in them, not to say enthusiastic. What joy to me, to see the young mind of Bertha tinged with the same taste, as I was allowed, nay, sometimes called upon, by Mr. Hastings himself, to read some of his favourite dramas aloud.

All these to hear, would gentle Bertha seriously incline. But reading was by no means her only pleasure. She had a little garden, not merely of flowers, but of the prettiest pot-herbs, scarlet-beans, and the like, which she was proud to present to her father at table, as the product of her own labour. And very pleasing was it to me, to observe her pleasure in such natural tastes, and how playfully she would quote a letter of Gray to one of his friends: "And so you have a gardening of your own, and plant and transplant, and are dirty and amused. Dear! how charming it must be, to walk out in one's own gardening, and sit on a bench in the open air. Have a care of sore throats, though; and the agoo¹."

I was proud to be allowed to share the labour of this garden, and to dig, while she raked, or sowed seeds. To be sure, I did not think of Adam and Eve!

But my pleasure was not confined to this. Think of my increased and well-founded admiration at finding the mind of this lovely being, though so young, fraught, from nature alone, with what the best education sometimes fails to inspire—a taste in elegant literature, for example. Yet although she had a well-accomplished governess for the *ornamental* parts of instruction, she had been almost left to herself, and her mere feelings had led her to take pleasure in those parts of poetry which most strike a well-cultivated taste.

I was led to observe this by being shewn one day, by Foljambe himself, a sort of essay she had voluntarily composed on the Pleasures of a Garden, in which, after many natural sentiments, prompted by the subject, she wound up an account of flowers with one of the most pleasing passages in the *Lycidas*.

"Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
That shrank thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowrets of a thousand hues.
Ye vallies low, where the wild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks;
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers;
Bring the rath primose, that forsaken dies,

¹ Gray to Nichols.

The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freakt with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang their pensive head."

To this extract was appended this note : "My dear father has promised me a diamond necklace when I am presented—whoever has these needs no diamonds."

"What a little blockhead!" said her brother, when we read it. I did not think so.

But with all this softness in her tastes, she had all the playful cheerfulness of her age.

It was one of her amusements to teach French to Charles and me; and when she scolded us, as she often did for our bad accent, she did it so pleasingly, and looked so arch, that I often made blunders on purpose to be so corrected.

It was the same with dancing, a master in which came over twice a week from York, and we were allowed to witness and even join in the exercise. But here she gave me the palm over her brother, who was totally without ear for music, in which to me nature had been bountiful; so that the French lady, who acted the part of governess, said, that "*pour la danse, le jeune Monsieur avait les meilleures dispositions du monde.*"

Of her feelings, however, or whether she had any towards *me*, I was ignorant. At least I observed nothing in her that bespoke interests not common to one of her age; gentle and complaisant to every body, but too easy to indicate any thing like interest for her new visitor.

Still in my secret heart, I felt, through every vein of it, a desire to please, and obtain her attention, if not something more. Thus, to be her friend at present, became, I thought, my only wish; as to be hereafter, by some turn of fortune, something better, was my only ambition.

O! how sweetly do youth and hope deceive us, and how happy are we to be so deceived!

But an end was too soon put to this happiness; for Foljambe, who had finished with Eton, as I had nearly with Sedbergh, was summoned to be matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, whither I was to follow him in a few months, with my exhibition to Queen's.

We were all a little sad at the prospect of parting, and Bertha's beautiful smile was gone. It was exchanged for a gravity which was marked, and yet it became her, or was at least quite as touching, perhaps more so, than the smile itself. Serious or laughing, her features spoke. When mirthful, her eyes ran over with joy; when pensive, with feeling. In fact, they were eyes that could, and I thought often did, utter "a thousand nameless tender things."

Well; for two days before the visit expired, she was grave, nay, very grave. She no longer bounded like a fawn, but absolutely walked, musing and slow, "a pensive nun devout and pure."

Shall I own my *self-flattery*? (I am quite sure it was not vanity, for I was too sincerely humble to feel that); "I thought, but it might not be so," that I had some share in the change.

Fool! coxcomb! madman! I forgot that she was about to lose her brother, and I was rightly punished. Yet when, with a suppressed sigh, and an eye *almost* in tears, she said to that brother, "I don't know what we shall do when you are *all* gone," I could not help saying to myself that *all* certainly meant more than one.

But this was by no means the whole. The day before our departure, judge my surprise, my joy, when, escorted by Mademoiselle La Porte, her French governess, she entered the room where Charles and I usually sat, bearing a beautiful little volume of the French poet Gresset in her hand, saying, with a smile, that she had her father's, Mr. Hastings's, permission to present it to me, as a reward for my industry in French. It was richly bound, and with some archness she said, "Mind, it is only as an encouragement to you to read it;—but if it also puts you in mind of your teachers, Mademoiselle, and me, so much the better."

"C'est bien dit, la chère enfant," said Mademoiselle La Porte; "et pour le jeune Monsieur, avec le français, le sentiment et la danse, il sera bientôt un héros de roman."

This "fooled me to the top of my bent," especially as Bertha smiled as if she assented; and, like the sentimental blockhead that I was, I gave myself (that is, in secret) the airs of a real lover; I vowed eternal constancy, and left Foljambe Park with far different notions, both of persons and things, from those with which I entered it.

The adieus of the family who had been so kind to me, were of a mixed character. Mr. Hastings was stately; not cold, but too evidently condescending, though intending to be kind. His son was careless and too full of Christ Church. But Bertha was frank and lovelier than ever.

Certainly the pressure of her finger, which I was allowed to touch at parting, thrilled through my veins; and I absolutely thought I heard the tongue of heaven, when, though in the stillest possible voice, she said, "I hope when Charles returns you will come again."

What wonder then if I left them with mixed and confused emotions of misery and joy, which my young philosophy could not analyse. All that I was certain of was, as I walked with a servant bearing my bag to the place where the coach was to take me up, that my heart had a weight upon it like a load of lead, and the great gates at the end of the avenue closed upon me with a creaking

noise which I thought unusual to them. They sounded horrors, and I could not help calling to mind the pathetic lamentation of Eve, on her banishment from the abode of her happiness.

“ Must I thus leave thee, Paradise ? thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of Gods ?
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild. How shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits.”

In the journey home, I passed in review every thing that had so pleasingly, yet so tormentingly, absorbed me, and allowed my mind to become a tumult of the happiest as well as the most despairing recollections. And yet (mark it ye young !), such is the irrepressible buoyancy of youth (ah ! how far beyond all that the world can give without it !), that my despair was not without alleviation. I was not in those regions of sorrow

“ Where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,
That comes to all.”

No ! amid my darkest gloom at leaving what I thought paradise, I could not part with the delight of thinking I might one day return to it, and a gleam of Bertha dressed in smiles, would sometimes dissipate all the black signs of hopelessness that otherwise surrounded me.

Thus, though sunk in grief, and often in despair, to think that I had no right to expect to see Bertha again, or, if I did, that it would only be as the wife of some higher and happier being, the coach could not pass a cottage in a retired nook, with a garden of neatness like her own, but I peopled it in imagination with all that my fond fancy could indulge ; in fact, with nothing short of what my wishes coveted, and my heart promised. That I might one day live in such a spot, in holy union with my beloved and latest found, was the raving of eighteen ; but I felt myself a man, and as my object is to paint nature as she is actually seen and felt, I will not be deterred from confessing these weaknesses.

I recollect, indeed, the observation of a celebrated French prelate¹ “ It is so far from dangerous, that it is even right, for young people to be made acquainted with love, in order that they may shut their senses against it when criminal, and know how to act when innocent and honourable.”

I will not, therefore, fear the ridicule which may attend this account of myself, nor am I ashamed of having so early entertained a passion which, under all disadvantages, and ten thousand anxieties and temptations, kept my mind pure and my conduct correct.

¹ Huet.

On arriving at home, I am ashamed to say, every thing appeared distasteful. My father's hale heartiness, though it pleased for the moment, had not the dignity which belonged to Mr. Hastings. His clothes were coarser, and not so well made; nor was my mother either so well dressed, nor had she so smooth a manner, as Mr. Hastings's housekeeper. The brusquerie of my brothers I was rather afraid of, so only said to myself, how different their deportment was from the Etonian knowingness acquired by my friend!

But Bertha, the elegant, the vivid, the frank, the graceful, whose every feature and every motion, even without the aid of her beauty, it did one good to think of; where was she? alas! not in my homely home, nor within fifty miles of it, but in her own palace—for such I thought the abode which was blessed with her presence.

It is inconceivable what misery this folly of mine (for surely it was not less) occasioned. But I tell it, that other young fools may take warning by it, and not run the risk of shipwreck among rocks and quicksands, because they do not chuse to see them.

Still shall I confess that when I did open my eyes, though I was fully aware of the impenetrable barrier that interposed between me and my wishes, the indulgence of them gave me sweeter enjoyments than the actual gratification of any others which I afterwards fostered. How did I not love that prettiest of all ballads, the "Wish," by Rogers! How often did I not repeat it in my walks, in my chamber, and in my bed. Though got by heart, I never stirred out without it, and I think of it now with delight, for the delight it gave me then. Rogers's more elaborate, perhaps finer poems, were not half so valued, whatever their superiority; and as, except to lovers of eighteen, it may not be so well remembered, I cannot even now refuse myself the pleasure of transcribing it, if only for the early recollections it brings along with it.

" Mine be a cot beside the hill,
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear,
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

" Around my ivied porch shall spring,
Each fragrant flow'r that drinks the dew,
And Lucy at her wheel shall sing
In russet gown and apron blue.

" The village church among the trees,
Where first our marriage vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze,
And point with taper spire to heav'n."

With this ruling, this absorbing feeling, no wonder that all other things became vapid. My first proof of this was in the total indifference with which I viewed our kindly neighbours at the Hall Place. They were as affable, and the girls as fine in dress as ever;

but so fastidious was I grown, that their affability seemed too familiar; and as to their finery, O! heavens! what comparison could it bear with the simple elegance of Bertha!

I visited the Hall, indeed, but the inhabitants, though so much wealthier than we, seemed now to have lost all pretensions to superiority, and were themselves thrown into obscurity. In fact, there was nothing elegant, any more than interesting in existence, but the scenery and inmates of Foljambe Park.

And yet I would not dissuade my younger readers, if the object is worthy, from early love. The boy lover may, indeed, not reach the chivalry of the mature knight, but depend upon it no youth, under the influence of an honourable attachment, will ever entertain a grovelling thought, much less stoop to a dishonourable act.

This I felt in my inmost heart. In mind, I became fastidious, delicate, jealous; in person and dress, nice, if not elegant. I was more than ever alive to the sweets of poetry, particularly pastoral, and I read with increased rapture in Virgil, the praises of Amaryllis or Galatea.

In fine, I quaffed the sweet poison of this delicious madness till, like other madmen, the delusion became part of myself, and, though fully aware of the hopelessness of my case, I would not have parted with my dream of success for all the realities of life.

In short, I felt the force of the exclamation of Leontes,—

“ Make me but think so twenty years together,
No settled senses of the world could match,
The pleasures of that madness.”

Thus passed my eighteenth year, full of romantic sentiment, which, inspired as it was by a soul-elevating as well as all-engrossing passion, created within me a sort of poetry of the heart, which, though it often was followed by cruel mortifications, never afterwards left me. It, in fact, under a thousand vicissitudes of good and evil, formed the gilding, or rather sunshine, of my life, chequered as it was with many a cloud.

The earliest of these mortifications was the not hearing any thing from Foljambe, much less of the deity, as I thought her, of that place, which I never remembered but as the abode of the happy.

To be sure, I nursed myself in unreasonable, because presumptuous, hopes, not merely that I should be remembered, but remembered with pleasure. My own ecstasies, which formed one perpetual remembrance of what I had seen and what I had enjoyed, forbade the thought that I should never see the Park again; but month after month passed on without any note of remembrance, still less of recall. Foljambe, indeed, had told me in the off-hand language of Eton, he would “tip me a line some convenient day or other;”—but I never found that day arrive.

I became querulous and melancholy, as well as fastidious, and my father—who, notwithstanding the retirement and mechanism of his life, was not without observation of the world, and derived some notions of human nature from even such temporary insight into it as could be derived from his attendances on the grand juries—in some degree divined my disease.

“Lad,” said he one day to me, “it was an evil hour when I allowed thee to pass those days with young Hastings at yon fine place, schoolfellow as he was. It has made thee discontent with thy own home, and will not help thee much, I doubt, abroad. Thou seest thou art already forgotten, and, mayhap, if they were to meet thee at summer assizes, they would not know thee.”

I shuddered at this, and combated it with all my might, but my father would not give up his opinion.

Early, however, or rather precocious as were the feelings I have described, scarcely intelligible even to myself, they were attended with effects upon my character which demonstrated them to be of the most pure and genuine cast. Not only I felt a sensible increase of manliness within me, but an elevation and refinement of spirit that was to myself surprising. My age had advanced seemingly half-a-dozen years. I felt like a man, and I thought like a man; and, above all, I felt and thought nothing but what a high-minded man would have allowed himself to think and feel. I spurned every thing mean, gross, or indelicate. I was alive only to sentiments that were honourable, polished, and liberal; not merely because they were estimable in themselves, but because they alone could be esteemed by *her*. I trust, I was not naturally disposed to their opposites, but if I was, my nature was changed, and I felt the force of an observation (I think, of Sterne), that a man in love can never condescend to a shabby thing.

The matter did not stop here, for I never now thought of myself so much the son of a decayed gentleman, as the descendant of the De Cliffords, whose ancient lineage and high renown I traced with heightened avidity in the library of the Hall Place.

About this time, too, I first met with the tragedy of Douglas, and, be sure, likened myself to young Norval; for, like him, though apparently a shepherd's son, I had in reality a high descent, and, like him,

“I had heard of battles, and I longed
To follow to the field some warlike lord.”

When also I came to the line,

“The blood of Douglas will protect itself.”

my heart leaped; for, of course, I felt convinced that the blood of Clifford would do the same.

How soon was all this fine romance dissipated by sober and homely reality, when, in the character of a poor exhibitor who had his bread to procure, I was summoned to the venerable and venerated seats of science at Oxford, whose towers now rise to my view, and open a new world to my recollections.

CHAPTER VI.

OXFORD SOCIETY AND MANNERS.—CHARACTER OF MR. FOTHERGILL.

Do you not grieve at this.

I shall be sent for in private to him; look you, he must seem thus to the world.

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry IV.*, *Second Part*.

IT was indeed a new world that greeted me in these celebrated temples of learning, which every one that has been among them has cause to remember, either for joy or sorrow. I shall not, however, attempt any minute account either of my impressions on my first arrival, or my occupations afterwards, chiefly those of study. I shall not record, because they will hereafter speak for themselves, the connections I formed; the manners I observed; the acquirements I made; the pleasures I enjoyed; the mortifications I endured.

These last, as a discipline for the mind, and as leading to the true knowledge, and therefore true appreciation of things (by which I mean of the world and human nature), did me more essential service in fitting me for after life than any other occurrences in my career.

At first, novelty and a semblance of independence, such as I had never felt before, promised happiness. The men of my own College were superior to me in nothing but experience, for I found myself by no means behind them in academical lore. Had distinction therefore been confined to those acquisitions of knowledge for which I supposed we all of us were sent to the place, I thought my chance of obtaining it equal to that of another, and therefore felt satisfied. Distinction was my object for more causes than one; for every page I read, every prize I obtained, and every acquaintance I cultivated, all resolved themselves into the one absorbing ambition that now filled my soul. To be one day worthy of the notice of Bertha was by far the most exciting, if not the only stimulus that prompted me to shut myself up, “forego all custom of exercise;” and thinking—

“To burst out into sudden blaze,

To scorn delights, and live laborious days.”

In short, as I had neither wealth nor other distinction, I felt that severe study alone would give me that after which my heart panted, in order

“To win her grace whom all commend.”

If I can accomplish high academical honours, I said to myself, they will certainly be heard of at Foljambe Park.

Precious, sanguine, and most sagacious youth ! to suppose that to construe Pindar, or even Lycophron, to have Aristotle at your fingers' ends, or to square the circle, if you could, would recommend at best a decayed gentleman and homely gownsman of Queen's to the bright eyes of a girl of sixteen, born of the aristocracy, and of a family as fastidious as they were ancient.

Such, however, is the all-stimulating power of this mightiest of our passions, mightiest at least in the bosom of a youth of eighteen. Thus I overleaped seeming impossibilities in the recollection of a single smile of Bertha. I forgot her superior fortune, her high descent, and aristocratic father.

All this, added to the recollection that I was the bosom friend of her brother, kept me up in my own estimation as long as I remained within my college ; but out of it, alas ! every thing taught me another lesson. For the moment I sallied beyond the gates, and mingled with, or rather looked at the world, I found that an English University was anything but a place where English freedom, or English equality, and independence of prerogative were practised. On the contrary, prerogative was every thing, independence nothing. There was the prerogative of birth ; the prerogative of riches ; the prerogative of fashion. There were silk gowns and gold tufts that lorded it over the humble crape or bombazine, and ate at the tables of masters and doctors, while the poor commoners were denominated "*inferioris ordinis*."

This, I own, stung me with the sense it gave of my own littleness ; but only because it seemed to increase my distance from Bertha. Every disparity was heightened, and caused tenfold mortification, from this cause alone. I hated grand compounders, not because they were men of a certain estate, but because I was a man of none, and therefore could not pretend to Bertha.

For the same reason I hated all the happy (as I then thought them) who took degrees *Honoris causâ* ; as if nobility, or royal descent, made a road to science easier and smoother than with the ordinary ranks. These things astounded, and almost made me a democrat, though Thucydides and Plutarch soon brought me round again by the hideous pictures they gave me of democracy¹.

¹ These are not times to do away distinctions of rank ; nevertheless the anomalies which appear in the state of English society and manners, where theoretically and in law all are equal, while practically there never were such inequalities, is an absolute riddle. If ever equality in every thing except merit ought to prevail, it surely ought to be in schools and colleges, the common fields of learning, in which he who cultivates them best, will obtain the greatest distinction. The immensity of the difference occasioned by the mere extraneous circumstances of rank and fortune among those whose community of youth and inexperience, and community of pursuits, it should seem, would insure equality, if anywhere to be found, appears not more impolitic than ridiculous. Besides its origin is feudal, and feudality having been long abolished, its excrescencies ought to

But alas! this was not all. Not only in the theatre, the university distinctions of rank convinced me of my own littleness, but the greater theatre of public opinion, the manners, looks, dress, exclusiveness, and airs of rank, wealth, and fashion, which I beheld in the streets, in the walks, and in the riding parties, all denoted separations of class, which brought my own inferiority, factitious as I felt it to be, more home to my indignant bosom¹. And very sore it was to the aspirations I had formed, and from which I could not part. I could have forgiven the coxcombry which made the wearer of a tufted gown with sleeves think himself far removed above my plain one without; but when in every look of superciliousness I met, I felt a demonstration of the impossibility of success in the mad wishes I indulged, I was ready to weep at what I felt to be the injustice of the world.

Hence, however, the increase and expansion of that independent spirit which in after years set me above “the whips and scorns of the time.” This spirit alone made me a keen examiner into the motives and characters of men; the nature and power of the passions; the operations of caprice, selfishness, or ambition; while, on the other hand, it gave me all the anodynes which reason and common sense, when not borne down by passion, supply to counteract our discontent, the cause of which, after all, is nothing but an all-devouring vanity on our own parts.

Remember, reader, I do not pretend to have acquired this spirit at the time I am describing. God knows, I had as many heart-burnings as another, particularly those which belonged to the absorbing, tormenting, yet delightful passion which I have described as possessing me. I am only surmising, at the same time that I confess the mortifications, the remedies which made them harmless, and I found them all summed up in one little sentence of the master of Nature, and charmer of our fancy,

“This above all—to thine own self be true.”

be abolished too: but such a reform is not the only one which the madness and wickedness of Chartism forbids.

¹ On this subject, see some able reflections by Sir E. L. Bulwer, in perhaps the best of his works, though not the most imaginative, “*England and the English*.”

“At no place are the demarcations of birth and fortune so faintly traced as at school—nowhere are they so broad and deep as at a university. The young noble is suddenly removed from the side of the young commoner. When he walks, he is indued in a distinguishing costume; when he dines, he is placed at a higher table, along with the heads of his college. Punctuality in lectures and prayers is of no vital importance to a young man of such expectations. At Cambridge, the eldest son of one baronet assumes a peculiarity in costume, to distinguish him from the younger son of another, and is probably a greater man at college than he ever is during the rest of his life. It is at college that an eldest son suddenly leaps into that consequence, that elevation above his brothers, which he afterwards retains through life. A marked distinction in dress, dinners, luxuries, and, in some colleges, discipline, shews by times the value attached to wealth, and wealth only. It is obvious that these distinctions, so sudden and so marked, must occasion an embarrassment and coldness in the continuance at college of friendships formed at schools.”—*England and the English*, p. 160-1.

This maxim, given to the young Laertes on setting out in the world, was first set before me by one of whom I shall presently speak, and of whom I never can speak but with reverence, for his knowledge of men as well as of books, and his saving care in steering me through a course of danger. In time, it laid such hold of me, that it never was out of my mind, and scarcely ever off my tongue, and I found it of such support and comfort, that, much to the diversion of my fellow-collegians, I wrote it in capital letters on the wall opposite my bed, that I might begin the day with it on my waking in the morning.

At first I was laughed at, ridiculed, quizzed. No matter, I kept on my course, and often quoted my motto to those who laughed *at* it, but by departing *from* it, too often stood in need of its wisdom. My inflexibility, indeed, in this and other matters, amounting almost to an appearance of phlegm (though any thing but phlegmatic), got me in the end, a sort of reputation for firmness and self-possession, which made me independent of scoffers.

In narrating these things I have rather digressed from the order of time, led from it by the opinions generated by what I saw, and what I observed as to the character of the place upon a fuller acquaintance with it.

I ought, however, preliminarily to have stated that I was consigned to the care and inspection of the Rev. Mr. Fothergill, the principal tutor, a cousin of my mother's, and to whom I had been especially recommended by testimonials from the great Crackenthorpe, for whose abilities and principles, notwithstanding his uncouthness, all Queen's men had the highest respect. This and our relationship created an interest about me at once in the mind of my tutor, which afterwards developed itself to my advantage. For he was a man not only well skilled in all college lore, but of great observation, made keener by natural shrewdness, and perhaps a natural disposition to sarcasm.

These, and the opportunities which his situation gave him of estimating the characters of the youths he superintended, by probing their motives, and watching the career of all about him, in other colleges as well as his own, had had ample play during the sort of censorship which for ten years he had exercised over all the various ranks of men which Oxford contained. They had also been well exercised in other and more exciting scenes, in other and higher walks of life ;—for he had not been always a mere barn yard academical bird, but had seen and acted, though with not too much pleasure, in far different societies than those into which he had now settled down. Of this I shall have occasion hereafter to speak.

Mr. Fothergill had withal a certain *bonhomie* and frankness of manner, approaching to goodnatured raillery, which, by disarming suspicion, laid people more open to his penetration. His exterior

was not polished, and his dialect had the broad twang of his county, which, while it gave a seemingly additional force to his observations, seemed also to add to their sincerity. Not that there was any disguise about him, for he was as honourable as shrewd, and good-natured as keen, untarnished by bad qualities, and wishing well to his species, though alive to their defects.

My first communication with him discovered something of his disposition; for my earliest desire, as may be supposed, was to find out Hastings, the friend of my childhood, the brother of my adored, on whom my all of happiness in the world just opening to me, both now and in future, seemed to depend. As Hastings had proceeded to college some time before me, I concluded, nor was I mistaken, that he was in Oxford as well as myself, and my first impulse was to see him. How delightful, I said to myself, to find this friend of my heart, still my fellow-labourer in the glorious vineyard of science, and to realize our fond anticipations of going through the world together.

The thought so pleased, that as soon as the ceremony of matriculation was over, I besought Mr. Fothergill, who was preparing to initiate me in my new way of life, to excuse me for half an hour, for that the dearest friend I had in the world was at Christ Church, and it would shock him and all the rights of friendship if I did not immediately seek him. "He will never forgive me," said I "if I delay a minute."

Mr. Fothergill smiled at this sally, a smile which I did not then understand.

"Cavalier enough," said he, "in a man just entered. You have all the feelings as well as the inexperience of a freshman. However, as you are so alive to friendship, and no doubt your friend is equally sensitive, and feels for you as if he were still at Sedbergh, go! search him out, and report to me as a good pupil ought to do, on your return."

He said this good-humouredly, though sceptical as to belief in the mutual professions of young men who, he said, were oftener more comrades than friends. In particular, from his opportunities of judging, he had no very high ideas of school friendships.

This I could not bear, and contested it with a warmth which only made him smile the more; so I set him down as cold and ascetic, who knew nothing of the balm and blessing of mutual regard; and to supply a complete refutation of his unjust opinion, I hurried to Christ Church as fast as I could.

When arrived at the gate, I begged the porter, a man of most imposing dignity, to inform Mr. Hastings that his friend Mr. Clifford (for I generally dropt the De) of Queen's was waiting for him.

"Mr. Hastings!" exclaimed the porter, surveying my stuff and sleeveless gown, "Why he is a *Gentleman Commoner*."

"I know it," said I.

"But he is engaged," replied he, "for I saw him go by to Lord Albany's rooms, who I suppose you don't know, and he will not be able to come to you, for he is hand and glove with my lord."

"What of that?" said I, with some impatience.

"Why, when they gets together, there's no saying when they'll part," replied the porter; "besides you say you belong to Queen's, and we have very few Queen's men, I may say none at all, as visits here."

Saucy enough, thought I; however I suppose there are Jack's-in-office every where, and, in my simplicity and my freshness, I told him I was sure Mr. Hastings would be extremely displeased with him for such an answer, for that I was his particular friend.

"That may or may not be," returned Cerberus, rather laughing, and surveying me again with a look of superciliousness, at the same time holding the wicket as if he would close it in my face. But whether I had the look of a real gentleman, although a decayed one, or he thought to prove a dignified superiority by condescension, he at last said he would take my name to Mr. Hastings, though he added, that he always staid long with my lord, and probably would not be down for an hour.

I meekly said I would wait the time, and the porter, with a smile at a resignation so unusual, and moved, I fear, more on account of Foljambe than Foljambe's friend, proceeded up a staircase with his message.

My impatience to embrace my friend may be imagined, as well as my disappointment, when the aristocratic janitor brought word that Mr. Hastings was so particularly engaged that he could not come down, but would call upon me soon at Queen's.

"I thought it would be so," added he, "for this is always the time when Lord Albany and he practises in the mufflers."

"Mufflers," cried I, in my ignorance, and not overpleased, "what are they?"

"O!" replied he, smiling again with a sense of superiority, "it's a sign you are a freshman, or you would know that Mr. Douce, who gives lessons in boxing, is more attended to than most of the other tutors."

I congratulated the university on this accession to their tutors, and withdrew to my college somewhat mortified, but still anticipating the pleasure of being visited by my friend in the course of at most an hour. I waited, however, all the rest of the day, having first warned our own porter to be on the watch in case I was asked for by Mr. Hastings of CHRIST CHURCH. But the warning was unnecessary; for after waiting the whole evening in vain, I retired to bed, and passed a restless night, thinking certainly with more pleasure of Bertha than of Bertha's brother.

The next day, as soon as the college exercises permitted it, I took the road again to Christ Church, for no Foljambe had appeared at Queen's; but before I could reach it, I was met by a gay party of young men on horseback, one of whom, by his air, I knew at once to be Hastings; I drew up upon the pavement that he might the more easily distinguish me. Will it be believed? Though he knew, and even kissed his hand and spoke to me, it was only to say "How are you?" nor did he stop, as I expected, to greet me, though my own heart was swelling towards him with joy and pleasure!

Astounded, discomfited, angry, grieved, I immediately returned to my rooms, in a paroxysm of contending emotions; having bolted my door, I threw myself on my bed unmanned, and would have wept had I not been ashamed. In this I knew not whether I was most prompted by offended pride, or disappointed affection.

Though so new to the university, I was not unaware of the great and marked line of distinction, whether as to literary or fashionable reputation, which belonged to different colleges, and I knew that in both Christ Church affected at least to take a lead. But I had no suspicion that this would interrupt the sacred rights of friendship, which, not having parted with my Sedbergh simplicity, I was fresh enough still to treat with all honour. Pride, however, got the better, and though, as the brother of Bertha, exclusive of my love for himself, Hastings seemed to me a sort of demi-god, I made a fierce resolution never again to visit Christ Church, till this advocate for the equality of mankind had returned my visit.

In this, however, I played a little at cheating the devil; for not to deprive myself of all chance of meeting him, and therefore of explanation, I spent all my spare time in the High-street, with occasional deviations into the public walks!

This lasted two days, during which my inquiries of our college porter after the expected call, were always answered with a gruff "No!" On the third I was greeted with the wished intelligence, which was much alloyed, however, by the addition that the young squire (as our porter called Hastings) had begun by asking whether I was not at dinner in the hall, and, being answered in the affirmative, had left his card.

The card, much to the gatekeeper's astonishment, I tore all to pieces! "He knew we dined earlier than other colleges," said I to myself, and "*therefore* he called. If I bear this!"

And I actually stamped with agitation.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GOOD ADVICE I RECEIVED FROM MY TUTOR, AND WHAT I THOUGHT OF HIM FOR IT.

Heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee.

SHAKESPEARE, *Troil. and Cress.*

“BEAR what? and what would you do?” said Mr. Fothergill, who had come close behind me, and heard my exclamation, without my perceiving him. “What is it that you are so resolved not to bear?”

Now, my good tutor, in the very little period (but three days) of our acquaintance, had already won much of my confidence. Indeed, I was always disposed, with the freshness of youth which is so delightful, rather to give than to withhold that confidence where it appeared to be deserved, so that I was upon the point of telling him my grievance. But he anticipated me.

“I can see,” said he, “that for the last two days you have been much ruffled. You have suddenly lost that open, joyous alacrity which I noted on your entry on this new scene, and which I attributed mainly to your hopes of renewing your familiar intercourse with ‘the dearest friend you have in the world.’” Here he smiled, as I thought, sarcastically, adding, “Was I right?”

“You certainly were,” replied I, colouring and growing hot.

“And am I right again in thinking that in this dearest friend you may not have met with all that reciprocity of friendship which you expected?”

“I certainly find this place,” answered I, with perhaps some equivocation, “different from Yorkshire.”

“And Christ Church, I suppose, very different from Sedbergh?”

“Perhaps so; but I know nothing about Christ Church.”

Seeing that I said this with humour—“Come,” added he, “not only as a tutor and a kinsman, but as one who has taken a liking to you, and would guide you in a strange land if he could, let me task your feelings a little; and if I seem to probe them deeply, attribute it to what it is—interest about your mother’s son, and one who has enjoyed good report from the greatest of Yorkshire authorities;—for, I dare say, old Crackenthorpe would not yield to any doctor of us all, in his supposed knowledge of the world, as well as of Homer.”

At this he took my arm, proposing a turn in Maudlin walks, “his custom always in the afternoon,” and spoke so good humouredly, that I forgot his inuendos, and (half disposed to it before) he

won me over to open all my mortification to him. "It seemed," I said, "the bitterest disappointment I had ever yet experienced."

"No doubt of it," observed Fothergill; "but you will be lucky, my young friend, if you meet not severer rubs than these, both now, in college, and still more hereafter in the world."

"Is this my prospect?" asked I. "And am I to forego the greatest and almost only delight I ever had—friendship?"

How much of this language was owing to the recollection of Bertha, how much to her brother, I will not pretend to say, but Mr. Fothergill, seeing my real anxiety, replied with kindness, yet with much decision of tone, "I honour you for your sincerity, and would rather regulate than destroy your sensibility, which, without such regulation, may do you a great deal more harm than good. In particular, I pity the disappointment you seem to be laying in store for yourself, in what you expect from this early friendship of yours with a man so much above you."

"Above me!" cried I. "Why at Sedbergh we were inseparable; and he always held that rank and fortune made no difference in friendship."

"'Twere a consummation devoutly to be wished," replied Fothergill, and walked on, as if he had no more to say.

After a turn or two, however, he stopped, and said, "Let us examine this matter a little. Here, you, with your stuff gown, and paltry exhibition of fifty pounds a year, at a plebeian college too, think you are to be on a level with a young heir, clothed with purple and fine linen, the companion of gold tufts, and who spends his five hundred in the temple of fashion! My good cousin," he added, seeing I coloured, "though I allow much for the blood of the Cliffords, this must be whipt out of you, or you will be miserable, both here and in the world."

"Yet I have heard Hastings himself say," replied I, not over pleased, "that friendship, like Cæsar's arms, will throw down all distinctions,

'Who e'er is brave and virtuous is a Roman.'

"And you believed him?"

"I did."

"Well, perhaps he believed so himself in the solitudes of Sedbergh, where there was no distinction to throw down; here we order things differently."

"But is not nature, nature," asked I, "and every where the same?"

"Undoubtedly; and it is because the change you complain of is mere nature, only finding itself in another situation, that your friend thus slights you."

"I would not think as you do for all the world," said I, with decision.

"Many have said the same," answered he dryly, "on this very spot too, and yet have come round to my opinion."

"But I know not that he has slighted me, after all," said I gathering courage, rather indignant at my tutor's suspicion.

"Bravo!" replied he; "keep up your gallant spirit. Go back to Christ Church; assert your equality with Foljambe Park, and see what will come of it."

It is astonishing how these words, "equality with Foljambe Park," unnerved me.

The inequality between me and that dear place, and the still dearer person who formed its chief or only value, had been too much the object of my secret lamentation not to make the speech sink deep into my feelings, and I gave a long-drawn sigh, which surprized my good tutor, fresh as he thought me.

"Come," said he, "this heart-burning is rather too much. I allow a good deal for a sudden disappointment to a warm young mind; but as you are to live in the world, I would teach you the world, and the first lesson I would give is, the impolicy, not to call it degradation, to the inferior, that attends *unequal* friendships,"

"Impolicy!" cried I; "degradation to love Hastings, or to have been won by his love!"

"Mistake me not," said my mentor; "it cannot degrade you to love Hastings, but it may to *court* his love, particularly if it is on the wane, or cannot bear the test of being transplanted from a wholesome natural soil to a hot-bed like this. You say yourself, that Eton, you feared, caused some alteration, and, be assured, Oxford will not mend the matter. Whatever may be the other advantages of Alma Mater, this one is great and certain, that she is an epitome of that world to which she is the first real entrance. You there first see life as it will be, and characters as they are, and here you will be really initiated in the knowledge of that demarcation which separates society into its different ranks."

"I hate all demarcations," exclaimed I, almost angrily, "that can separate kindred minds. At school we always thought alike. He loved nobody so well, indeed nobody else, and said we should go through the world together."

Fothergill gave his accustomed smile, though he allowed that *perhaps* Hastings might have thought himself sincere when he said this.

"Perhaps!" cried I, "thought himself! O, how little do you know him!"

"We shall see," said my mentor. He then paused, as if I had made him doubt; but resuming—"I love your confiding disposition," said he, "and may it not be disappointed. Yet the coldness

shewn already, shews also whereabouts Hastings considers you. He has already caught the *esprit de corps* of his proud college, which animated its very porter when he so saucily told you they had very few Queen's men 'as visited there.'—But even without the aids of Christ Church to imbue him with all the vanities of youth, his position in the world alone, even his very talents, which have already shewn themselves in all the eccentricities in which young high-born men, and rich withal, are allowed here to indulge themselves, would make me fear for your happiness with him. Though here but six months, he has already distinguished himself as a sort of Alcibiades, in both luxury, gallantry, and the love of being conspicuous. With so much mercury in his composition—which, though dormant at Sedbergh and under his father's roof, where sentiment and romance might have been the order of the day, has been warmed into activity by the brisker atmosphere of Oxford and liberty—how could he fail to make himself notorious, as a flirt with the women, and a renowner with the men¹. In the first of these characters I fear he has already done much mischief to the daughter of one of our most respectable heads of houses, whose head he has turned by attentions which, of course, meaning nothing, can be little less than fraudulent; as Clara Meadows, the poor girl I mean, has even now found to her cost.

“I have mentioned Alcibiades,” continued Fothergill, after a momentary pause, “because we lectured about him yesterday in Plutarch; but take also what Marmontel says of him, turning him, indeed, into a Frenchman. ‘La Nature et la fortune sembloient avoir conspiré au bonheur d’Alcibiade. Richesses, talens, beauté, naissance, la fleur de l’âge et de la santé; que de titres pour avoir tous les ridicules!’”

I own, I thought this a bitter sarcasm, and could not believe a word of it. I accused Fothergill, in my own mind, of prejudice, perhaps of envy, at any rate of petty tyranny. Never would I believe that Hastings, who had so exclusively loved me at school, and introduced me to his aristocratic father and angelic sister, as almost an equal, could be proud, much less ridiculous.

My looks spoke my feelings; and Fothergill, seeing my emotion, good-naturedly, to change the conversation, said he would give me some tea at his rooms; an honour which, offered to a freshman and under-graduate, by a tutor and Master of Arts, I could not decline.

¹ Alluding, no doubt, to the students of the German universities, where to be *notorious* for excess of any kind is necessary to their reputation, and goes by the name of “renowning.”

CHAPTER VIII.

EFFECTS OF OXFORD SOCIETY AND MANNERS ON FOLJAMBE HASTINGS.

Spoke like a tall fellow that respects his reputation.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Rich. III.*

NOTWITHSTANDING my tutor's kindness, and my sense of his condescension, being such an academical grandee in comparison with myself, I felt a sort of sullenness at the tea-table, of which I afterwards was ashamed. I was jealous for myself, and, though sufficiently indignant, jealous for Hastings too. For my own sake, I would not believe that he had slighted me, and for his, I would not believe that he *could* do so. I recollected, vividly and fondly, all the elegant superiorities of Foljambe Park, particularly those of what I called its young mistress; and I was angry with my kind, though shrewd and observing adviser, for the advice and opinions he had given. I had heard of college pedants, and rusty tutors, and could not help, in my wisdom and my justice, ranking him as one of them. I then, for the first time, observed that his clothes were ill made, and not over well brushed; his band was rumpled, and not well starched; and his figure, though erect from decision of mind, was too ponderous to be elegant.

He knows nothing of Foljambe Park, thought I, and it is because he is insensible to the attractions of the high manners, and ignorant of the beauty and grace, that reign there, that he desires to break this connexion. He never saw Bertha, and wishes to make me a yeoman like himself.

What injustice did I not do to this kind and honourable, as well as observing man, in this petulant opinion of him! Yet it was some time before I gave him the credit he deserved for cool judgment and knowledge of life, acquired by the skilful use he had made of his opportunities. As it was, I was out of humour, and as soon as possible disengaging myself from the honours of the tea party, I proceeded to moralize very differently, among the gay throng which of an evening peopled the shades of Christ Church walk.

Here I observed excellent specimens of provincial and academical consequence, in all the exhibitions of nature which my tutor had discussed. And very varied were they, according as the pride of scholarship in the men, with its consequent power, and comfortable endowments, or the pride of beauty in the women, with its consciousness still more inflated from its scarcity, predominated.

The heads of houses equalled the pomp of generals on a parade; while their wives and daughters, with the sort of natural instinct

inherent in the sex, played (and with equal success) the part of their supposed betters in the higher walks of life.

What particularly struck me, was the immense consequence given by the younger and unmarried females to a number of young men whose costume denoted them of quality, and who buzzed about them with gilded wings, dangerous to their young heads, and perhaps to their young hearts, if the hearts of coquets, which most university beauties are, can ever be said to be in danger.

However this may be, the importance of these young men, or rather perhaps of the association kindled by the silk and velvet in which they were clothed, was fully demonstrated in the reception everywhere given them by fathers and mothers, and especially by daughters.

These last seemed to "rain influence, and judge the prize" of fashion in this microcosm of human life now beheld for the first time.

But what struck me still more on this occasion, was the poor and unimportant figure made by Commoners like myself, in comparison with the happier people I have mentioned,—happier, if to absorb the notice of the fair dryads of the walk, to the exclusion of us plebeians, was happiness; as I then thought it was. I felt, indeed, so uneasy under it, that I became pensive and melancholy amid the gaiety that surrounded me, and was upon the point of returning home to hear what my mentor had to say upon it, when, sailing down the walk at the head of a bevy composed of the deities of the place, I beheld Hastings, in the full glory of university and fashionable consequence, occupying all attention from male and female.

As our eyes met, it was impossible for him not to know me, and I loved him still too much to repress the pleasure I had in seeing him. Undazzled therefore by his companions, and alive only to nature, I waited not for his recognition, but fairly and so pointedly sought his hand, that he could not refuse it. He gave it, however, with an embarrassed air, not the less because my eagerness, for a moment, discomposed the movement of his party, whose curiosity was piqued by my *brusquerie*. Lord Albany and sir Henry Melford in particular stared at me with lofty wonder, the ladies tittered, and my friend was evidently disconcerted by the interruption.

Do not, however, let me be unjust to Hastings; his embarrassment was not that of a vulgar coxcomb, ashamed of meeting an inferior in high company. He himself was too high, too much at his ease in that company, and too conscious of his own station and powers, to condescend to such a thought. The little awkwardness shewn, as he afterwards confessed, arose from a sort of shame, or rather a sense of ingratitude, which he felt, at having neglected an old companion who had always shewn such evident attachment to him.

With respect to myself, new to the world (especially the fine world), its manners and conventional signs, I felt no shame, for I

had done no wrong. I was not even abashed, but was alive only to the pleasure of at last meeting my best and only friend, no matter how surrounded. As to his former seeming slight, therefore, it was all forgiven in a moment.

To do him justice, he perceived this, and whatever his feeling, he had not the heart to repulse me, but, his companions having passed on, seemed quite to recover himself, and said, with almost his old frankness, that he rejoiced to see me. Nay, though his friends once or twice looked back, as if inquiring what he could possibly have to do with a humble Queen's man, it did not detach him from the colloquy while it lasted. He even apologized for not having found me out, and, though he said (what I already felt to be true), that Oxford was very different from Sedbergh, hoped we should not forget our pleasant school days together.

Though this was uttered in a tone of sincerity, I own I did not like it. I thought it was said protectingly, and more politely than suited my downright disposition. I was, however, relieved, when with more heartiness, he asked me to breakfast with him the next morning, in order, as he said, to talk over old Crackenthorpe and his milkmaid daughters. I was in hopes he would have added something of one who was any thing but a milkmaid, and I was about to inquire after Bertha; but my heart failed, my tongue refused its office, and we parted, he to regain his gay companions, I to revolve, in my way home, the thousand thoughts, some agreeable, some doubtful, occasioned by this interview.

The approaching dusk gave a tinge to this frame of mind, not altogether unpleasing, but of a sombre hue, and the tolling of Tom, that greatest of curfews, sending all stragglers home to their colleges, wound up my feelings with appropriate solemnity.

I had now food for meditation quite enough to employ and prolong my waking hours. However, set off by his sense of his own consequence, and the influence he seemed to enjoy with his fine friends, it was evident that Hastings had not forgotten me, and could not be estranged from a man whom he had asked to breakfast.

My tutor's surmise, therefore, as to his finery was palpably wrong. Of finery indeed he was guiltless, for, as I have said, he was too proud to be merely fine.

Shall I here disguise my own silly finery or vanity, call it what you will (it was not worthy the name of pride), when the next day, on going to my appointment, I said, in a tone of self-consequence, to my friend the porter when he let me in, "I am going to breakfast with Mr. Hastings." Fool that I was, I took pleasure in the janitor's bow at these words, for it made me think that he had altered his opinion of me, and perhaps of my whole college. So much for the philosophy of eighteen.

This nonsense, however, soon passed away, thanks to Fothergill

and my own sense of independence, and I mention it because in relating the facts of my life, I mean not to cancel its follies.

When I joined my friend, however, the elegance of his rooms, and the *recherche* of his breakfast, reminded me much, and almost painfully, of the grandeur which had for the first time made me feel my own littleness at Foljambe Park.

Had Hastings, indeed, been the only one concerned in this, I perhaps should not have minded it. In regard to him, I felt like a real brother, or rather like the Hidalgo of Castile, whose saying I always so much admired—"I am as good a gentleman as the king, only not so rich;" and this, without referring to the blood of the Clifford's, but merely from a conviction that may belong to every one who feels his mind to be the abode of honour, and is a gentleman, whatever his condition. The superiority, therefore, of Hastings, in his rooms, and his table equipage, and an imposing French valet, in a laced livery, whom for a certain buoyant vivacity in his attentions, he likened to, and called by the name of, La Fleur—all these were of little consequence to my happiness; but the thought of Bertha, conjoined with that superiority, made me sigh.

Hastings, however, interested me for his own sake. He was decidedly handsome—tall, like his father, and, like him, of a most aristocratic manner, which had grown greatly upon him since he commenced man; only it was less dignified, from being younger, and of a liveliness which led him into something like flippancy and love of ridicule, acquired at Eton, and by no means repressed by his college.

In this, as I afterwards discovered, Hastings was much abetted by his friend, Lord Albany, and both were fierce in keeping parvenus at a distance. With such he was never familiar, though, in the spirit of youth, he did not disdain what they both called "roasting a quiz" wherever they found him.

These, indeed, were after discoveries, for I must say that, in regard to myself at this meeting, nothing seemed more genuine than the manner in which he opened himself to me as his early friend and school-fellow, accompanied, however, as we shall see, with both fastidiousness and levity, which denoted any thing but the sober seriousness of thought and feeling upon which our early friendship had been seemingly founded.

Sedbergh, and its great master, and young mistresses (whose bony ankles and red elbows were not forgotten, any more than their father's enthusiasm for schoolmasters), gave ample scope to his powers of ridicule.

I own, though I laughed at his sallies, I could not help, at the same time, being struck with that change from the softer and more natural tone of conversation in which Hastings had seemed once so glad to indulge. I endeavoured to recal this tone; talked of the

great elm before the school-house door, under whose shade we had read together, and of the secluded lanes, where we had walked and plucked blackberries together, and where we had vowed eternal friendship to one another. I also particularly (and I own designedly) reminded him of his generous opinions at that time, on the equalizing nature of friendship in general, and how he laughed at all worldly distinctions.

A curling sort of smile played round his mouth when he replied to this ebullition, "My dear Cliff (for so he used to call me), I perceive you have preserved all your charming simplicity; and all you have recalled was certainly very delightful at the time, and would be so again, if we were again in Crim Tartary (so he now called our northern village). But this, like many other things, is one of the 'has beens.'"

This startled me, and I now began to think, not pleasantly, that my tutor might be in the right.

"The world," Hastings continued, "is the world, and a strange one it is, as you will find when, like me, you have been six months here. I can scarcely ask you what you think of it now, on only three or four days' acquaintance, and that among those strange animals you have chosen to herd with at Queen's."

"Herd with! Animals!" exclaimed I, with emphasis, for I did not like the expressions.

"O! I cry you mercy," said he, "for I perceive I have called up all the blood of the De Cliffords; but I beg to assure your lordship, that I meant no disparagement to your dignity, or that of Queen Phillippa either."

This allusion to my school sobriquet rather annoyed me, but as I thought it mere rattle, and not, I hoped, intended to offend, I forgave it. In fact, it was jealousy alone that made me take the umbrage I did. Had he not been Hastings, or the brother of Bertha, I should have laughed at it as heartily as himself.

Hastings had, however, another advantage over me, exclusive of his superior condition, and near connection with her who engrossed and exercised all my feelings. He seemed deeply initiated in all the mysteries of this new sphere, which I had just entered; and talked freely and quizzingly of tutors, and even of heads of houses; which to me seemed almost treason. Then as to their females, whom he quizzed too, to my astonishment (as he had the evening before seemed to be engrossed by them) he called them mere pretty fools; apes of higher models, whom they could never reach; in fact (as he styled them), mere Brummagem Duchesses.

Little indeed do these ladies, who perhaps have verses daily made to their eyebrows, and for whose smile there is often contention,

¹ Phillippa, Queen of Edward III., was the foundress of Queen's College, and thence the name.

know the liberties that are taken with them, by those very dangles whose attentions most excite their ambition, perhaps their affection. For they do so for mere amusement, in a place where they look in vain for their equals, and after professing themselves their admirers, laugh at, despise, and leave them.

When I expressed my surprise at this satire against persons with whom he had appeared so occupied, he laughed it off with a *nonchalance* which I almost envied, while I blamed it.

"My dear fellow," said he, "what can we do? These are but the 'sportive tricks' for which, and to court 'an amorous looking-glass,' the bloody and deformed Richard found that he was not made, and therefore complained that he had

'No delight to pass away the time.'

Hence, to use his own words, as he 'could not prove a lover, he was determined to be a villain.' Now, as to *nous autres*, though we are not villains, and are neither deformed nor bloody, we think we have a right to the sportive tricks denied to crook-backed Richard, and seek a little innocent flirtation to pass away the time. Nay, don't scold, for do I not give chapter and verse for it, out of the best possible authority—your own Shakspeare?"

This off-hand rattle, though it overpowered, did not convince me that there was not something selfish and even fraudulent, to use Fothergill's stern word, in regard to Miss Meadows, in playing with another's feelings, or even her weakness, for one's own sport, though death to the other party.

Seeing I looked serious upon it, my vivacious friend went on—"Come," said he, "I see, my grave and reverend signor, that my code of morality does not square with yours, and is disapproved by the sage philosophers of Cumberland and Queen's. Yet I would wager that you cannot convict me of unfair dealing; for am I doing more than standing in self-defence?"

"Self-defence?"

"Yes! as I will prove to any person of candour, though not perhaps to a fellow of Queen's, or emphatically to that sour tutor of yours, Bothergill, or Fothergill, or whatever his name is, who seems, whenever we see him, to be, *ficulus et inutile lignum*, stuck up to frighten us fluttering birds."

I was more and more astonished, nay horrified at this licentious attack on my tutor, by my once sober and sentimental friend. However, conscious as I then felt myself of my own inferior breeding, I supposed it one of the privileges of a *superioris ordinis commensalis*, and I told him so.

"No! indeed," said he, "for every one, in this college at least, thinks Fothergill a mere sour krout; and as to the females, who seem to have won you for their knight, what would you yourself do

if you saw one of these dashing girls, acting with the permission, perhaps encouragement, of both her honoured parents, full of a deep design upon your sweet person? Don't start, for I only mean in a lawful way : indeed no other would suit her purpose, or that of her reverend papa and mamma. Well, upon the strength of her own pretty person, and a sort of fashion about her from putting her clothes on well, she has become the toast of the university, from Christ Church down to——I beg pardon, I must not say Queen's, but, for illustration sake, will specify Alban Hall."

Somewhat hurt, I bowed my thanks for sparing my college pride; yet I was amused, and though at the same time startled, I continued to listen.

"Well," added he, "this acknowledged College Princess, not unnaturally, thinks the whole university, all the doctors, both the proctors, and, what is far better, all the grand compounders, gentlemen commoners, and even all the noblemen, at her feet. She is the Grand Turk in petticoats, and thinks she may throw her handkerchief to whom she pleases. She throws it to me, and if I catch it and play with it, nay keep it for a time, without meaning to pocket it, am I to be blamed for enjoying the amusement she so freely offers? After all, these ladies are mere *belles de garnison*, and Oxford is in this respect no more than a garrison. A flirtation, therefore, is only a *passe-temps* on both sides. It is true it ends sometimes in a *mariage de garnison*, which is proverbial for a *mésalliance*; but of this I, at least, will not be an example. For be assured, I am not in the least disposed to fall really in love with second-hand people!"

"I at least admire your superior taste, as well as your prudence," said I, "and your comparison of yourself with bloody Richard, as well as Oxford with country quarters, is singularly illustrative."

"I thought I should convince you," proceeded he, affecting to take me literally, "and, to recur again to our old master, you will own, 'it is the sport to have the engineer hoist with his own petard.'"

Shall I confess that, what with this reckless gaiety, which also sat so easy upon him that he seemed assured of being in the right, and what with (by no means the smallest cause) his vast superiority of condition, now opening upon me more and more, from the licence it seemed to give him, I had nothing to reply; and though I did not descend to the meanness of flattering him by allowing he was right, I was confused enough, or coward enough, not to be able to tell him how he was wrong. I fell into a reverie upon the changes, great and glaring, which the difference of our educations, as well as lots in the world, had occasioned in so short a time, and sat dumb, and I fear stupid, before this specimen of what I thought the spoiled children of the world.

Hastings seemed fully conscious of his superiority; and my feel-

ing that he was so, gave me no pleasure; so that it was a relief to me when his servant came in with "Mi Lor Albany's compliment, and Monsieur Douce vas wait for to give de leçon of de box."

"Ha!" said he, "I am summoned, and am afraid must leave you, which I know you will excuse, as you were always a good boy, and regular at lecture."

So saying, he shook hands cordially enough, and reaching a pair of mufflers, which hung over his chimney-piece, we proceeded down stairs together, he to his noble friend and fellow pupil, to what he called lecture, I to ponder all these novelties, which, in truth, caused me much thought, in a slow and moody retreat to my college.

CHAPTER IX.

MORTIFICATIONS AND AFFRONTS FROM INEQUALITY OF RANK.

The proud man's contumely.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

"THIS, then, is Oxford," said I to myself, as I proceeded up a by-way which led to Queen's; "this my earliest, my dearest friend, the man with whom I was to go through the world; the brother of Bertha. Ah! if she were to see or hear him now, would she approve or love him as she did when——."

The thought did not please, and I strove to banish the recollection of that morning, the most critical and, as I thought, auspicious of my life, when I first viewed her bounding, as I have described her, like a fawn, willingly into his arms, as her beloved brother, esteemed as much as beloved. "No!" said I, "she would not approve; she could not but blame this mockery of all that is serious; she was liveliness itself, but never light."

I hurried on my pace, seeking, perhaps, to get rid of my subject; then, suddenly stopping, "And yet," I continued, "may not all this be assumed? May not there be a fashionable as well as a vulgar slang? He was not wont to be thus, and he at least had no example for it at home."

The grave deportment of his father then rose before me; the serious civility of the domestics, and indeed the regularity and order of the whole house. There were jokes, indeed, too, but they were in Bertha's laughing eyes, and certainly not such jokes as these.

These reflections brought me, in no very attentive humour, to my lecture with Mr. Fothergill, very different from that with Mr. Douce. He perceived it, and half-reproachingly, half-kindly, ob-

served, that breakfasting with fine gentlemen was a bad preparation for a lecture. Seeing, however, that I was not only absent, but really not happy, he good-humouredly adjourned my attendance, and said he would resume with me after he had finished with his other pupils.

Retired to my room, I threw my Plutarch on my table, and myself on my couch.

Sterne says of old Shandy, throwing himself sidelong on his bed to meditate Tristram's misfortune, that a horizontal posture alleviates grief. I know not his authority, but as his own is a very good one in all these little matters of feeling, I suppose he is right;—for I felt, as I lay on my right side, with my right arm under my head, and jogging my left leg over the other against the frame of the sofa, that my musing, by degrees, got less unpleasant and disturbed. “This can only be a freak of Hastings,” said I, “either to amuse himself or banter me. He cannot mean to give himself these airs; he has too much real honour, as well as sense, to be the thing he affects.”

I was consoling myself with this thought, when my tutor came in. “You have not gained much by your visit,” said he, observing my pensive position, which however, I immediately quitted, out of respect to him. “I see discontent, if not disappointment, in your eye. What! you have found that Oxford practice accords not with Sedbergh professions. You and your friend are no longer,

‘ Like to a double-cherry, seeming parted,
And yet a union in partition.’ ”

“Nay, it is not that,” said I, “for he was really glad to see me.”

“Yes! I suppose he begged you to sit down, and did the honours of his breakfast-table most condescendingly. But did he really not make you feel the difference between you?”

“That I cannot say,” answered I.

“I thought so,” said Mr. Fothergill.

“The difference, however,” I continued, “was not what you suspect.” I then described to my friendly relation the immense change which I thought I had observed in the manner, mind, and language of my schoolfellow, which distressed me, though I supposed it might indicate superior knowledge of the world.

“Of which knowledge you are jealous,” observed Fothergill.

“No, no, indeed; but I own I did not like that things which I thought serious, should be laughed at, and myself and college quizzed, while I felt restrained from answering by I know not what fear of his higher condition, and the tone of superiority which this seemed to give him.”

“This is silly, though not unnatural,” said Mr. Fothergill, “and must be whipped out of you, or you will be miserable. As for his rattling tone in regard to what you so properly think serious, I

could pass that by, as the mere ebullition of a spoiled youth, who thinks he writes man the better for seeming careless of what a man should be. He is afraid of being thought in leading-strings, and affects freedom accordingly. But what most alarms me for you is, this friendship of yours, which, being what is called an unequal alliance—a thing I never saw come to good, but generally to harm—I would, by all means, advise you to set yourself against.”

“That seems cruel and unnatural,” answered I, “not to say unreasonable and ungrateful, especially as, though I see a contemptuous manner as to things and persons in general, he gave me no reason to think I was among them. Ought I not at least to wait till I do?”

“It is better to prevent than cure,” replied Fothergill. “It will be bitter for you perhaps to take leave of this quality youngster; it will be more so to be left by him. And now for Plutarch.”

We then proceeded to lecture, and in the unbridled and profligate eccentricities of Alcibiades, leading to every sort of crime, he made me read a proof that high gifts, when unrestrained by principle, so far from conferring happiness, produce nothing but mortification, humiliation, disappointment, and death. This, and the contempt it bred in me for every thing like mob rule, mob justice, and mob leaders, did me lasting service.

Here, however, Fothergill displayed his well-balanced mind, and his able manner of directing a youthful judgment. For, seeing the indignation, not to say hatred, with which the democracy of Athens inspired me, he bade me take care not to draw general conclusions from partial examples, but wait the whole scope of history: and in particular to weigh the conduct and character of kings, before I decided against a government by the people. Yet Fothergill was no democrat.

The lecture over, I was again left alone to contemplate my existing position; but my contemplations were not agreeable. The new world I was in did not open upon me auspiciously. I had set my heart upon renewing my old fondness for Hastings. I loved him for himself, and still more for his sister. A change on his part I never thought possible, and, as to inequality, it had never crossed my imagination. My tutor's prognostics, therefore, appeared to me both gloomy and unfounded; and though I respected his penetration and experience, I at least knew none of the cases on which he grounded his opinion. Besides, there were exceptions to every thing, and why should not this friendship of mine and Hastings be one of them?

With the buoyancy and confidence of youth (for youthful apprehensions seldom last long), I therefore resolved to slight the advice I had received, and sallied forth in the evening, in a frame of mind, without a reason for it, different, lighter and happier, than that of the morning.

My steps, almost mechanically, directed themselves to the same place, Christ Church Walk (the general promenade of an evening), where I had met Hastings the evening before ; and I met him again.

He was again with Lord Albany, and one or two more men of figure, and, seeing me advance towards him with the pleasure I really felt at meeting, he appeared again embarrassed. It was not, as I have before said, the embarrassment of an upstart, surprised by a quondam equal in high company, but one which seemed to proceed from displeasure, and a sense of an improper liberty taken ; for, in my untaught manners, I thought only of him, and broke in upon him, caring little for ceremony with his companions.

He decided at once what to do, and said, "Clifford, a word with you." Then, apologizing to his friends for leaving them a moment, he took me on one side. Having done this, he startled me by saying, with an air of distance, "I perceive, my good friend, that you are so new to this place, and indeed to the world, as to have a great deal to learn, perhaps to unlearn, and it is only due to friendship to tell you of it. You will not take it ill?"

"Certainly not," said I, surprised, but neither mortified nor humbled, for I did not know my crime.

"Good," observed he ; "but this is not the place to confer about it at large, and we will take another opportunity. Meantime, do not misunderstand me if I tell you that it is against good breeding, as well as custom, for a stranger to intrude himself upon persons he does not know, especially if they be as far above him in rank as those gentlemen whom you have discomposed are above you ; and this, though it be to greet an old friend and school companion. You have a right to seek me, and to be even 'hail fellow well met,' with me, if you please, and in your place, but not if I am in the midst of company who can know nothing of you, and to whose acquaintance perhaps you would not, and ought not, to pretend. It is necessary I should give you this hint for your own guidance, in a place where you are yet a stranger ; but it will be a good rule all the world over. Come and see me as often as you please, but do not force the notice of others. Lord Albany, with whom you saw I was engaged, is a peer of the realm."

I was so confused, nay, astounded, at this speech, that I had not a word at command to reply to it ; seeing which, he touched my finger, and saying, he hoped we should meet again at a time more convenient, turned back to rejoin his company, leaving me overwhelmed with astonishment, indignation, and grief.

To recover, I took refuge in Merton Gardens, which I had begun to love for their beauty and retirement, and, throwing myself on a bench, gave way to uncertain, though very melancholy, thoughts, till the evening began to shut in, and twilight surprised me before I could well be said to have recovered from my confusion.

In this situation I was roused by the sound of voices from persons advancing, and plainly made out from one of them—"It seems that he is a hanger-on of Charles's family, and hence the acquaintance."

This was all I could distinguish, but it was quite enough to arouse my jealousy, for of course there was but one Charles in the world.

I started on my legs to ascertain from whom the words proceeded, and of two persons who were conversing, one, by his gold tuft, I instantly recollected to be Lord Albany. This left me no doubt that Hastings was the Charles alluded to, and I the "hanger-on" designated.

It is strange what an instant additional tumult these two little words excited in a breast already the seat of jealous resentment. Adieu to the happy composure which I had looked for from the garden, and soft evening. The ugly epithet I had heard redoubled my concern. But though mortified, resentful, angry, I was yet not fool enough to allow my feelings to explode, by accosting the speaker, as I at first thought of doing; for I had sense enough to reflect, that even if it was proved that Hastings was the person in question, it followed not that there were no others to whom the epithet of hanger-on might really belong, not to mention that it was totally inapplicable to *me*. I therefore for the moment pocketed the supposed affront, though it gave my heart a convulsion, and returned home, torn by a thousand contending feelings.

My night was hot and restless. Am I that thing? said I, a thousand times over. Am I his servant, or at least his dependent, and not his friend?—nay, his equal? I would add in a fit of honest pride—equal by his own account, from being his friend? Then it came across me to refine upon the phrase, and I found some alleviation that it was only as the hanger-on of his *family*, not of *himself*, that I was characterised.

There was more comfort in this than at first appeared, for was not Bertha part of that family, and would not that make dependence, or even servitude, sweet? This pleased, and I again fastened upon the passage I had early applied to her, and never forgotten:—

"To be your fellow,
You may deny me, but I will be your servant,
Whether you will or no."

This hushed me into calm, and I fell into a sleep, but of short duration, for I woke from a dream any thing but pleasant. I thought that Foljambe Hall was lighted up, and resounded with feasting and revelry, in honour of Lord Albany's marriage with Bertha, from which I fled with horrors, like those created by an incubus.

To recover myself, I rose with the light, and opening my window

to let in a cooler air, was refreshed by it both in body and mind. Thoroughly awake, I seriously revolved (it had become seriously necessary) my critical position with Hastings.

A hanger-on could not be a friend, yet to dwindle into a mere acquaintance with him was impossible. I must either continue to love him, and be loved by him, or estrange myself from him altogether. The latter made me tremble, for estrangement from him was always associated with banishment from his sister. But the prophecy of Fothergill in respect to unequal friendships and *mésalliances* had now derived much force from Hastings's late address to me, and the critical words I had overheard. I had sense enough therefore to discard from the account all my favourite prejudices of the blood of the De Cliffords and Bardolfes, and reducing myself to what I was—a yeoman in station—resolved to assert the proper self respect (I had almost said dignity) which belongs to every free man, whatever his condition.

The rising sun found me in this improved temper. It was summer, the sky was brilliant, the birds sang, and I had a beautiful view from my windows of the peaceful dignity of Maudlin Tower, bosomed high in the tufted trees that surrounded it. "That tower," said I, "ought to be the emblem of every man happy in himself. It is full of quiet harmony; independent, yet unpretending; alike removed from meretricious ornament and the rudeness of poverty. So ought we to be in the world, and so, if heaven favour me, I will be."

I lost myself in this sober but cheerful train of thought, mixt with a pleasing solemnity, which the view of the beautiful simplicity of this edifice, "looking tranquillity," with me always generated. In an instant, I felt equal to Hastings, or Lord Albany himself, in the eye of my Maker, and the inequalities of life no longer vexed me.

There are moments now and then in one's history peculiarly precious, either from some sudden relief from care, some subsiding into calm after tumult, some new light acquired, or mental victory, which are ever afterwards looked at by memory with soothing satisfaction. This was one of them. Young as I was, I had the seeds of unaffected piety always within me, and had accustomed myself to consider all mankind as the children of one common parent, who made no difference in the consequence he gave, or the care he took of them. In this point of view, prouder men than Lord Albany, or Foljambe (if Foljambe was proud), sunk to a level with even humbler men than myself, and the epithet which had so disturbed me, disturbed me no longer. "I will at least shew Hastings," said I, "that his estimate of me is false; I will renounce this *unequal alliance*."

Thus my tutor obtained a triumph. And yet there was perhaps too much pride in forming the resolution. I was not calm enough in

making it. I should have been more really independent, had it been attended with less passion.

So thought the cool and rational Fothergill himself, when I told him, as I did, all that I had overheard, and all I had resolved, after the distressing night I had passed. He greatly approved, nay, was somewhat affected, at the manner and the cause of my recovering myself, which I did not conceal from him, but, to my surprise, did not, as I expected, commend my resolution to break immediately with Hastings. On the contrary, he exclaimed with Cato,

“Let us appear nor rash, nor diffident.”

“Though I thought it right to caution your sanguine temper against the expectation of what so often fails, and what I have almost constantly seen frittered away in this struggling arena of ours,—the continuance of school friendships between parties of unequal conditions,—still I would not renounce it by a downright breach, nor be the person to begin the estrangement, without palpable cause. If Hastings is the Alcibiades of which he gives so many tokens, it will not be long before he will afford you ample opportunity to enforce your resolution. But even Alcibiades had some redeeming qualities; therefore, give even the devil fair play : wait on your oars, and see what will come of it.”

I own this discomposed, as well as surprised me, for I not only expected the highest eulogies on my stoicism, but having braced myself up to the measure, as necessary to my peace for the long term to which I looked forward at Oxford, I was almost sorry to have my firmness shaken, as it was, by this want of unction, as I thought, in commending it. The mere wavering which it caused brought me back to Sedbergh and Foljambe Park, and both had such habitual possession of me, nay, had been so entirely the only interest that absorbed me, that the effort to dislodge it seemed unnatural, and I returned to it with the renovated and increased animation which generally attends a reconciliation after a lover's quarrel.

All this while, Foljambe knew nothing of his influence over my projected conduct. He knew not, perhaps cared not, for the tumult he had caused, for the wound he had given, or the salve I had endeavoured to apply to it, by resolving to throw him off. How often does this attend us in life, and could we see into one another's minds, how many burning struggles, mistakes, imaginary affronts, or unwarrantable expectations, might be avoided, how many friendships remain unbroken!

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which you will have enough here; but once give it the reins—let it lead you wrong, or plunge you into false ambition—that is, make you seek a place that does not belong to you, and which this very pride, well regulated, would make you avoid—you immediately become the sport of those whom you condescend to court. ‘*Optat ephippia bos*’ contains a useful lesson, and the anguish of Wolsey is unpitied, when he exclaims,

‘My high-blown pride at length broke under me.’”

Such were the lessons of this excellent man. Whether I profited by them or not, remains to be seen; but the pride he had noticed, and even recommended, made me assure him, with perhaps too much quickness, that he was mistaken if he thought I could *court* any body, and that if I seemed so eager in watching Hastings’s conduct, it was only because of old affection, and quite as the equal he had taught me to consider myself. “His friend,” said I, “I may still be; his hanger-on I never will be. Once convinced that he thinks I am so, in that instant I am restored.”

“I desire nothing better,” said Fothergill.

CHAPTER X.

I DISCOVER MORE OF THE REAL CHARACTER OF FOLJAMBE HASTINGS.—CROSS-EXAMINED BY MY TUTOR AS TO MY LOVE FOR BERTHA.

Breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty—
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

The worst fault you have is to be in love.

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’Tis a fault I would not change for all your virtue.

Id.—*As You Like It*.

FOR one or two days after this conversation I kept close to my college, though my mind often wandered after the person who so much interested me, as in truth he did many others, though in a manner far different. For by this time I had learned, in regard to him, what astonished, as much as it distressed me. I thought I had a right to know him well, and though of an eager character, running often to extremes, a strong feeling of friendship and a taste for letters had, at Sedbergh, seemed the order of the day. But from what I now learned, I found it must have been owing to the want of opportunity and competitors, in more stirring scenes, that he thus settled down into the sentimental and philosophic youth he seemed to be. He disdained most of his school-mates, and loved to associate with no one but me, who, though sufficiently ‘*commoto dentro*,’

was generally "*cheto fuor*." With me, there could be no rivalry in anything but the acquisition of learning ; and though the competition of schoolboys in every thing else is fierce enough (witness his battle with Ramshorn), that which is confined to their books is seldom of a loud character.

Judge then my surprise, to be told by many that, though but six months in the University, Hastings had already attained to almost the summit of notoriety. I mean not as to learning ; though in this also he was so little deficient, that in his themes, but particularly his verses—thanks to Eton—he had won the praise of his tutors. With this, however, he was little content ; for, strange to say of the quiet person he had been at Sedbergh,—to be, par excellence, *the renowner* of Oxford, seemed to be his great ambition.

Hence he was always the first of his clique, whatever their object. At the tennis-court he could play the marker without odds ; in the field he led the hunt ; and on the water was perfect at the oars. At Bullington, in summer, he presided over cricket ; and at Port Meadow, in winter, was inimitable in skating. He gave suppers to the young nobility in his rooms, and pic-nics to the ladies in Bagley Wood. The old English game of single-stick was not then quite worn out, and he actually had won a hat upon a public stage at Abingdon, in a perilous contest, not without blood, of twelve on a side, between the two counties of Oxford and Berks. The hat he brought that very evening in triumph, and laid it at the feet of one of three mistresses who had been given him by the public voice.

In fencing and boxing with Mr. Douce, nobody went beyond him, and nobody, except Lord Albany, could come near his excellence in pistol firing at a mark.

These two were rival "*renowners*" in every thing, but especially in this,—in which they practised every day, with such equal success, that the numerous spectators, who assembled to witness their skill, hoped they would never quarrel, as, if they did, it would be impossible for either of them to escape.

Then again he played nobly at billiards ; and he would sit up half the night at whist, or the bottle. But the acmè of his fame was acquired at Ascot, where he actually won a plate run for by gentlemen who rode their own horses ; and that the renown of it might not be lost, he returned in the jockey dress and cap in which he had run, from the heath to the very gate of Christ Church, to the astonishment and dismay of all the officials.

This, however, had like to have cost him dear, for there was an intention to expel him for riding a race ; but he pleaded so stoutly, though so respectfully, that he had had leave to attend the course, and was not therefore within the jurisdiction of the college, that the plea was allowed ; and having declared that the degradation of riding through the streets in jockey costume was mere absence of mind,

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This, however, had like to have cost him dear, for there was an intention to expel him for riding a race ; but he pleaded so stoutly, though so respectfully, that he had had leave to attend the course, and was not therefore within the jurisdiction of the college, that the plea was allowed ; and having declared that the degradation of riding through the streets in jockey costume was mere absence of mind,

without intention to break rules, moreover expressing sorrow, and being withal a sort of favourite, from his high station, figure, and talents, he was let off for a very heavy imposition, and confined to college till it was accomplished!

Even here renown did not abandon him; for he gave the task to two servitors to perform for him, and paid them with such a number of guineas, that his love of fame was gratified to the last.

These things came out by degrees, and had been the talk of the different colleges before I came, and this disposition and conduct were what caused Mr. Fothergill to liken him to Alcibiades. My astonishment at hearing them may be conceived, but I was also grieved at the account, because it too forcibly proved that the disparity of our dispositions was at least equal to that of our stations, and that friendship with such a man, if not already lost, could not continue. On the other hand, Lord Albany was his constant companion, aider and abetter in these excesses, and how in any thing could I compare with Lord Albany?

The thought sank deep into my soul, but still deeper for the conviction which it gave, that the little evanescent and almost imperceptible hope (imperceptible even to myself), that my intimacy with the brother might lead to one with the sister—that this hope, I say, was lost for ever. My misery was complete.

This was not unperceived by my observing tutor, who told me he plainly saw, not only that I was much changed in manner and spirits, but that there must be a far deeper cause for it, than the fear of losing a mere school friendship. I allowed this to be truth, and as concealment, simulation, or dissimulation, were no parts of my character, he soon got the whole out of me.

The impression this made upon his kindly feelings—kindly, though often stern in his decisions—was serious indeed.

“My good fellow,” said he, “I now see to what more than half the interest you feel for your school-fellow is owing. I knew not that there was a female in the case, that female Hastings’s sister, the descendant of the Plantagenets, and the grand-daughter of a German prince. This is no trifle, and requires more than momentary deliberation to advise upon it. Meantime, take my word for it, this extreme susceptibility of yours will go near to ruin you.”

I asked if this was all the consolation he could give me? He paused, and said it was certainly something like the comfort of Job’s friends; and that he would help me if he could, but feared I had not heroism enough to conquer the difficulty.

I asked what heroism he meant.

“To lay the axe to the root of the tree, and cut the whole down in forgetfulness; which, after all,” said he, “is not so impossible.”

I shook my head.

“Why, you do not say that you ever told your love, much less

what encouragement, if any, you have received from her. Has she ever——”

“Oh! no! no! no!” said I, interrupting him with anxiety; “she was good, gracious, and condescending, but not more to me than all others—and when I think of her bright radiance,

‘It were all one

That I should love a bright particular star,

And think to wed it, she is so above me.’”

I said this with so much emotion, faltering in my speech as it escaped, that the good Fothergill was affected; his rough exterior gave way; he took my hand, and his hard features softened into more than common fellow-feeling; but he told me that nothing but a total and complete banishment of the very name, and of course all that bore it, from my memory, could work any cure. “Were you like her brother himself,” said he, “and could you, like him, fly from flower to flower, and *amuse* yourself with ‘*beautés de garnison*,’ or seek the thousand diversions of thought which the ambition of being a “renowner” occasions, I might have some hopes for you; but you are *jeune homme à parfait amour*; you walk gardens and court cloisters, rather than the High Street or the cricket-ground; you prefer sighing to merriment; you are like Jacques, you ‘do love melancholy better than laughing,’ and the hold the brother has upon you is cherished a thousand times more fondly, because in the brother is cherished the thought of the sister.”

Though I felt every word of this to be true, and mourned that it should be so, yet I could not help wondering where my tutor had got this penetration, on a subject to which, from his habits, manners, and appearance, it should seem he must have been a stranger. But at any rate, the reasoning was good, and the power, only, not the will, was wanting. For I found myself unequal to the promise he demanded of me, to use all means and appliances to drive the whole family from my memory.

“It will smooth your path *here*,” said he, “as well as *there*; for this unhappy accident (as I may call it), which has so lifted you above yourself, has placed you every way in a false position, and your intimacy with Mr. Hastings, even if renewed, which is doubtful, will only be pregnant with mortification; while to cherish your feelings for this young lady must plunge you in despair.”

“There is not a word you have said,” I answered, “to which I do not defer. And yet——”

“What?”

“The despair would be welcome, in preference to oblivion; and I would rather be hopeless in my love, than not love Bertha.”

“I give you up,” said Fothergill, somewhat ruffled, and he walked away.

This troubled me: and not the less because he was right. Then,

again, though he was my cousin, and had shown himself my real friend, he was also my tutor, and a high college official. But I was a real lover, and to a real lover, even without hope, and though his mistress may even be ignorant of his passion, the dream of that mistress is often sweeter than liberty itself.

Fothergill, however, had been too abrupt. He was perhaps himself invulnerable, and therefore hard to others. I sulked also, and walked away to "commune with my own heart, in my chamber," though not to be still; rather indeed the reverse; for in my chamber I did not stay ten minutes, but sallied forth into the town, unknowing where to go.

My steps, however, were soon directed, for I met my friend's French valet, who, accosting me with the consequential national politeness of a French valet of fashion, said he had brought me "von letter from his master, le jeune Seigneur Hastings, who vas a leetel indispose, and wish mosh for de company of monsieur, for one petit quart d'heure."

Recollecting the preceding evening's conversation, my heart leaped up at this, as it looked like an alteration of sentiment.

"I am sorry he is ill," said I.

"Not ver ill," replied the valet, "mais il veut bien se fortifier contre l'ennui, avec monsieur."

"Has he not his friend, Lord Albany, with him?" asked I.

"Mi lor," replied La Fleur (for so, as I have said, his master had christened him), "was gone to Blenheim, with a party of jeunes dames, to visit the château of le grand Malbrook, and jeune Monsieur Hastings was au désespoir that he no go too, pour cause—"

Here La Fleur shook his head almost as significantly as Lord Burleigh.

"And what cause?" asked I, with curiosity.

"Von leetel (how you call it?) imposition," replied the valet, "for which he is aux arrêts, and can no stir; but monsieur will open his billet and will see all about dat, sans doute."

It was time I should; but meanwhile I dismissed the valet with my compliments, and I would come directly.

I then opened the note, and read as follows:

MY DEAR ORESTES.

"Our ruler has had the audacity to confine me, because I refused to obey a nonsensical order, that none of us should attend the race ball last night. What makes it worse, all my friends have flown off in different directions. Pray, therefore, come, if only for half-an-hour. A sober Queen's man for an associate and counsellor may perhaps redeem me with the tyrant, who has been most pragmatical in this matter.

"Yours,

"PYLADES."

This allusion to our school nicknames by no means displeased me. It is impossible, I said, to myself, that he wishes to forget old friendship ; Fothergill is wrong :—and I quickened my pace to Christ Church.

CHAPTER XI.

I TELL MY MIND TO FOLJAMBE.—THE CONSEQUENCES OF IT.

That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this.

* * * * *

Must I stand and crouch

Under your testy humour? By the gods,

You shall digest the venom of your spleen!

Though it split you.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Julius Cæsar*.

My old friend the porter received me at the gate with still improved obsequiousness (another barometer of the surrounding atmosphere) ; for La Fleur, with whom he had struck up an alliance (I suppose not unequal, and therefore likely to last), had informed him of the message to me, as he did of every thing else concerning his master, and this made the shrewd janitor suppose that I could be no common person. He treated me accordingly.

For my own part, I no longer played the meek freshman of Queen's, but received his salutation as my mere due, and passed on with a sort of calm dignity (at least what was intended for such), which I took no pains to repress, and it lasted all the way into Hastings's presence, of whom I felt, or thought I did, less and less afraid. I at any rate resolved to probe both his heart and character to the bottom. If he really loves, and does not disdain me, thought I, I will make him disclose himself unequivocally ; if he is what Fothergill thinks, and I am sacrificed either to the caprice or pride of Alcibiades, it is time to show him how I value the one or the other.

With this, assuming a determined air, I suffered La Fleur to usher me to his master, in a humour which perhaps augured little good to the explanations I sought,—as was proved by my reception of the first words he uttered when he saw me.

“ I have *sent for you*,” said he, “ as a man I could depend upon, in the absence of Lord Albany, and I am sure you will serve me faithfully in a point in which I find my honour concerned.”

He said this with a sort of lofty sternness, which he could assume, and totally free from that flippant tone which had characterized our last meeting. In fact, he seemed much impressed with the wrong which he supposed had been done him. His language, however, did not satisfy me.

So, then, thought I, he *sends for me*, as a patron to his client, in the very spirit of patrician arrogance, and only because his brother patrician is absent. This will never do. I however answered, not over pleased, "I await your commands; who is it that has offended your honour?"

"The tyrant of this place," he replied: "first, in refusing me a favour (a paltry one), which I condescended to ask, when I might have enjoyed what I wanted at less inconvenience, without asking. Next, in abusing his power to punish me for acting in despite of his refusal. You are ignorant of the ambiguous position a man is in, when thrown with another to whom he is superior in point of station in the world, inferior in the little circle of official powers. But though you may not be a judge of this, from want of opportunity to observe it among your own associates, I know you to have a great deal of common sense, and it is to that, as an old acquaintance, I wish to appeal."

"Old *acquaintance*!" thought I. "What, then, has become of friendship!" I however bowed my thanks for his condescension in allowing me common sense, although, in other respects, so incapable of appreciating a case between persons of such high degree.

Thus we set out ill; for he began by undervaluing, and therefore by indisposing to his service, the counsellor he had chosen. Hence, I was somewhat stiff in my reply.

"The situation you have described," said I, "and of which you say, truly, I can be no judge, being so inferior myself, and so wanting experience of the ways of great men, may be one of difficulty, but surely not what you have called it, ambiguous. I suppose your course is clear, and you have nothing to do but to obey. Indeed, I have always understood, that to learn obedience when young, if only to know how to command when old, is one of the objects of education."

"Very sententious, truly!" replied Hastings, "and worthy the sage of Queen's, to say nothing of the disciple of old Crackenthorpe. Why, I should have *thout* it was that arch pedagogue and ornament of Coomberland himself who was speaking to me."

"He would have been a better adviser," said I; "but you asked my opinion, and I have given it, though only *in generalibus*; for as yet I know nothing of the case on which you do me the honour to consult me."

He measured me with his eye, as if surprised at my formality; then, after some hesitation, observed, "You are right, quite right, and perhaps it would have been best not to have troubled you. Yet I wished to know what you advocates for obedience to those dressed in the little brief authority, for which, no doubt, you are already a candidate, could say in support of the veriest petty tyranny that ever was perpetrated."

He then informed me, that Lord Albany's sister, Lady Charlotte Saville, having come to the races, he had engaged to dance with her at the ball in the evening, spite of a college order, that no under-graduate should attend it; which little impediment he might have jump't if he had pleased, undergoing, he supposed, a slight punishment, but that, out of respect, he thought it best to ask permission; notwithstanding which, to his astonishment, it was refused, with the addition of a reason still more surprising, that if granted to him it must be granted to others—"a want of tact," said he, "which I did not expect from one who affects to understand so well what is due to rank and station. But this it is to expect gentlemanly practice from plebeian theorists."

"Your notion then is," said I, dryly, "that to make no distinction, where all have equal right, is a plebeian theory."

"A man can have little knowledge of the world," replied he, curling his lip, "who does not see that such distinctions are always made in society, and none but a narrow pedant would use his authority thus. I therefore scouted his reason, and went with Albany to the ball, spite of his refusal."

"Lord Albany, then, broke the order also?"

"No! luckily he had taken his degree, 'Honoris causa,' three days before, and therefore came not within it."

"And the event?"

"The event is, that, I have a heavy imposition, which I shall not perform; am confined to college till I have finished it, and am rusticated for the two next terms."

I suppose I looked alarmed, for he cried, "What, does this frighten you? If so, how will you be able to form an opinion of what I mean to do?"

"Which is"——

"To laugh at the decree, and instantly leave the place, notwithstanding the sentence of confinement, so that I shall never return."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "without consulting your father! What will he—what will your admirable sister say?"

"As to my father," he replied, "if I consulted him, which I shall not do, he would let me do as I please; and for my sister, she is a little fool, but not such a fool as to oppose me."

I was horror-struck, for, with respect to his sister, what he had uttered seemed little less than blasphemy. In truth, I was shocked with the marked, and to me, sudden change that had apparently taken place in his whole character;—so little can we judge of its reality, while latent from want of incentive to call it into action.

His affair with Ramshorn, indeed, I had always remembered, as a proof of a determined spirit, in whatever he undertook; but I neither knew nor believed that he would allow it to govern him

in every thing, good or bad, according to the turn he might take. Here he seemed the strangest compound of a fierce rebel and proud aristocrat that could be imagined. I knew not, in my then simplicity, that such a thing could be. I afterwards found in the world, especially in the political world, that nothing was more common.

"Well," said he, observing my hesitation, "I see this troubles you. When you have recovered yourself, I trust you will honour me with your approbation."

Convinced that he was decidedly wrong, I did no such thing; and both hurt and offended at the tone he had taken in regard to me, and in communicating a resolution, rather than requesting advice, I told him so in terms.

"What," said he, "is the blood of the Cliffords still on the *qui vive*? What will you do in the world, where perhaps it will not be much regarded, if it so easily boil over?"

"Act with the same sincerity," said I, "that I now shew you, when I would restrain you, if I could, from putting yourself more and more in the wrong,"

"If I have been wrong," said he contemptuously, "it has been in consulting one who, from his situation, is not a proper judge."

I bowed my thanks again, in a manner to shew that I thought him rude; upon which, in a tone somewhat altered, he proceeded, "you think me then originally wrong."

"I do."

"And your advice is"——

"Not to think yourself above legitimate control, who show that you cannot control yourself."

"Very good and sententious all this, Mr. Clifford."

"On the contrary," I continued, "redeem yourself by submission."

"Submission! By heavens! this is too much.—'You know that you are Brutus who speak this.' I looked not for it when I sent for you."

"Or probably you would not have sent. Eh! Is that so, Hastings? Was I to be consulted merely to confirm you in an error of conduct? But I ought to tell you more; for I have thought bitterly and cruelly of the change which there too obviously is between us. I never *was* Brutus, or am certainly so no longer.—The boy whom you deemed worthy of your affection when upon a footing with you in the desert, is no longer so in the peopled world, where you may chuse your companions. But though this may be true, injustice should never be done, and that boy, because honoured by your family as their visitor, should not be represented to those companions as your '*hanger on*.'"

Having made this effort, I seized my hat, and motioned as if to leave the room; but astonished, and almost confounded, he advanced

towards the door, declaring in a less loud tone, that he knew not what I meant, and that I should not go till I had explained.

Angered at what I supposed to be an evasion, though it perhaps might be real forgetfulness—"Do not," said I, "add affectation of ignorance to the injustice I complain of. The condescension of your family I shall ever acknowledge; my friendship with you has been the delight of my life; but ask yourself if I ever was theirs or your 'hanger on,' and add to the question whether you have not so represented me to Lord Albany?"

I then left the room, and was upon the stairs, when he followed me and cried, "Stay! return! this must not be."

Not so resentful as to be unwilling to listen to a man whom I felt I still loved, and who might have repented of his fault, I instantly obeyed, and once more found myself with him in private. He began immediately.

"Though I might slight much of what you have said to me, evidently most unwarrantably, yet your last surmise is too derogatory to my honour to pass unheeded. I told you I did not understand you, and I told you true. How you got at any thing from Lord Albany respecting any supposed conversation of mine, is to me extraordinary, as there is not and cannot be the least intercourse between you and him; but you have mentioned a particular expression, as coming from me in regard to you, which, if correct, you have a right to resent, but which, denying it to be true, I have also a right to have explained. Relate, if you please, the authority upon which it is founded."

"Allowing," returned I with some spleen, "allowing to the full, your intimation, that there is not and cannot be any intercourse between so great a person as Lord Albany and myself—a hint not necessary, I assure you, to remind me of my inferiority—he reddened much at this)—I reply to your question, that the authority was his own."

"Impossible! I desire particulars."

"You shall have them;" and I related what I had heard, and what any body else might have heard, in the walk in Merton Gardens; adding, my reasoning upon it, that I could have been the only person meant.

He admitted the inference, but denied the correctness of the representation.

"Clifford," said he, "I declare before heaven, that as you never deserved the appellation, so it never was applied to you by me. It must have been Albany's own incorrect construction of what I may have related of our acquaintance, and your visit to Foljambe Park."

"Hastings," I said, "I believe you; because, however I may lament the change there evidently has been made in you already by the world, I believe that you are too proud to assert a falsehood."

“I am satisfied,” said he, “and as to the changes you glance at, I am perhaps also too proud to enter upon a defence. In my present position, indeed, with the despot I am embroiled with, you will excuse me if I feel obliged to decline the subject, and direct all my attention to the conduct it demands of me. I lament that it cannot be what you have advised; and so——”

“Farewell, you would say,” observed I, re-opening the door, “and I say so too.”

With this, and a bow not over cordial on either side, I left him.

CHAPTER XII.

A DISSERTATION ON UNEQUAL FRIENDSHIP.

And so farewell to the little good you bear me.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Henry VIII.*

SUCH was my soliloquy, repeated many times on my way home. For, though I seemed in a wilderness of thought, in which Sedbergh, Foljambe Park, Hastings, and Bertha, all had their turns, this sentiment seemed uppermost, and I felt that Hastings and I were separated for ever. The only consolation I had was the entire disavowal that I had been called by that degrading name fixed upon me by Albany; for Albany's own misconstructions I did not care a rush. And now for Fothergill, who I found had sent for me while I was away.

That rough, probing, keenly observing, but goodnatured man, and true friend, who, full of shrewd Cumberland sense, and “wrapt in his virtue and a good surtout,” beheld from his watch-tower at Queen's all the turmoils and struggles of the world, without partaking them himself, had now repented of the rough handling he had given me, for the romance I had confessed in my love for Bertha. He had parted from me, as he himself allowed, in one of his pets, and thinking I had gone out in one of mine, followed me to see what might come of it. “No good, I fear,” added he, “for I followed you to Christ Church, where, I mistake, if, from your looks, you have not past through a fiery ordeal, hot, perhaps, as the burning ploughshares of old.”

In answer to this, I immediately related to him all that had passed with Hastings.

“Well,” said he, “as sooner or later this must have happened, perhaps you are to be felicitated that it has happened so soon. You are mournful, I see, and I should be sorry if you were not. The time will come when your mourning may be turned into joy; for

what has happened will deliver you from the fear of that character, the very suspicion of which caused you so much and such just resentment. You may not sleep better for it to night, but you will to-morrow ; you will tread lighter during the next day, and you will become more like your favourite emblem there (and he pointed to Maudlin Tower), seemingly rejoicing, as you said, in its own simplicity."

Moody as I was, I was alive to this poetry of my tutor, for such I thought it ; and yet I could not help thinking, too, that something like a noble mind was overthrown in Hastings.

"There was honour, I allow," said Fothergill, "in his seeking to exculpate himself as he did, from the charge of having slandered you to Lord Albany ; but he has changed towards you, nevertheless, changed for no cause but being corrupted by the tinselled prosperity he enjoys. Whatever he did, he does not now, I was going to say, *love* you as he does Lord Albany ; but I will not profane the term. For it is not Albany that he loves, but his gay position in the world ; his title, his fortune, already his own, crowning him in his youth ; add to this the *éclat* of his fashion, so dazzling to old as well as young, in this place ; and last, though not least, perhaps his sister."

"His sister?"

"Yes ! for is not Lady Charlotte among women, what he is among men ? and high and rich as are the Hastings, would not a Lady Charlotte among them be a sort of godsend ?"

Seeing I looked surprised, he added, "I do not mean that they might not pretend to her alliance, but still so propitious a connexion would be valued and courted, and therefore a godsend."

The thought made me tremble, for it reminded me poignantly of my own comparative littleness in my dreams of Bertha.

"All these things conjoined," proceeded my tutor, "form, as you see, a train of inducements to this intimacy with the marquess, and yet contain no one real ingredient of that personal merit which makes a man valuable, or loveable for his own sake ; and if he has no more than these, whole days with him, equal not in true and rational happiness one hour of that placid and self-approving time, when you opened your hearts to each other at Sedbergh."

The thought affected me, and seeing me moved by the recollection, Fothergill changed his hand, and checked the impression, by adding, "Yet *you* are the self-same person (only improved in knowledge) as you were at the school-house. Were Hastings so too, why should he slight you for a man who, though known enough here, is only known for the most common-place qualities that belong to youth—seats of activity and noisy merriment ; while for genius, scholarship, or any one feature of mental merit, we look in vain."

I thought this no more than true, and not the less when he added,

“You see in this, I do not reason from the silly prejudices of many who abuse their superiors, merely because they are such, and deny merit to all ranks above them, from mere envy. The supposition is as false as it is mean, and arises only from the selfishness of a vulgar mind. Nevertheless, as greatness may spoil those who possess it, they are to be tried as well as others before they are either trusted or condemned; and you have tried Hastings. You have not avoided him from a cowardly fear of finding him what you had no right to suppose, without proof. You have, indeed, each thrown the other off, but he from supercilious caprice, you from manly independence. Which has the most reason to be satisfied?”

This appeared oracular as to Foljambe, but alas! it touched not the case of Bertha. She had never been spoiled. She, I was assured (I stopt not to inquire how), was always the same, and so I told Fothergill, who said with some dryness, there could not possibly be a doubt of it, especially as I had such good proof for my assertions; “for you, of course,” observed he, still more sarcastically, “have made yourself well acquainted with all her thoughts, feelings, and conversations; her companions, likings, and dislikings; in short, all her operations, from the moment you left her to this present time.”

I had no answer to make to this raillery; indeed, I began to feel, and I dare say to look, a little foolish, for which I was not spared by my unmerciful preceptor.

“What,” said he, “though you have never professed your admiration, never assured her of your constancy—she knows it all, no doubt, by intuition—knows that you

‘Fade away and wither in your bloom;
That you forget to sleep, and loath your food,
And youth, and health, and books are joyless to you;’

While you, on your part, are equally certain that your merit in one little visit, made an impression never to be forgotten on her virgin heart. Upon my word, this Love is an admirable conjuror, and fools us passing well.”

I now began to think Fothergill a tyrant, and repented me that I had ever made him my confidant, at least as to Bertha; and as to her brother, being put upon my mettle, I asked him with some spleen, whether in his philosophy as to unequal friendships, he thought that no friendship could exist except between persons born in the same rank, possessing the same fortunes, and even the same powers of mind?

“It is a nice question,” said he, “and cannot be answered, except with modifications and explanations, which might lead us very far. To possess exactly the same rank and fortune, is certainly not necessary, though that there should be no great disparity of *class* or endowments, I think is. Yet were I pressed for a categorical

reply, summed up in one general rule, subject of course to exceptions, I should answer you in the affirmative. For, as far as I could ever read in tale or history, the life and soul of friendship is equality. No doubt an equality of class, with equal endowments and perfect independence, may reduce the inequality of fortune, and even of power. A prince is a prince, though all princes are not equal; and God forbid that a gentleman less rich than another, should not be the companion and friend of a gentleman. But even here, if the stations are *widely* different; if the parties do not class well as to connexions; if the superior looks down upon those of the inferior, though he be glad to tolerate him for himself, there is an anomaly leading to danger. In this I speak not of those intimacies which often carry men through the world together, the basis of which is mutual usefulness. These are more properly *alliances* than *friendships*, and such an alliance you might have had with Hastings, if nothing had intervened to mar it. But have a care, that even here your independence might not find itself wrecked. Recollect the fable of the mouse, who having done a good turn to the lion, demanded his daughter in marriage as his reward, which was granted; but just as the royal bride was stepping into bed, she accidentally trod upon her tiny husband, and crushed him to death."

I was still moody under this banter, for I own I thought of Bertha, and did not reply; so he proceeded.

"You must not be offended at this illustration, or think it designed to damp other hopes or exertions which may really lead to honour. It is to guard them so as to prevent their ending in disappointment, that I tell you to what you may be exposed. The beauty, the delight, the balm of friendship, is the perfect *freedom* of intercourse; the unrestrained exhibition of mind one to another. If there is *dependence* as well as inequality, these are out of the question. Sultan Amurath, in the midst of his rapture with a favourite wife, who he thought really loved him, frightened love away for ever by merely saying in jest, 'How easily now I could cut this little head off which I am so fond of!' From that moment love fled from the sultana, and she was left 'a mere lifeless automaton,' instead of a warm and affectionate mistress. A philosopher, too, as you know, once said, he could not argue with a man who was master of twenty legions, whatever he might be of the argument. So with a patron,—which, depend upon it, the superior of two friends will for the most part be, whatever the inferior may think of it. If the inferior, full of independence, sets himself up to prove his equality, ten to one but he grows oppressive, or what is called a bore, and that is incompatible with love. He will annoy by constant jealousy, which he is afraid to let sleep; and what mutual equanimity jealousy generates I leave you to judge. But suppose the lower in fortune is the higher in mind! is full of wit, sense, learning, & genius! criticises, perhaps

quizzes ! Think you this will be borne by the superior in rank, power, authority, and fortune ? If he feels himself put out of countenance by his inferior, will he seek to recover his position by keeping up intercourse with the friend who obscures him ? If the inferior assert his equality with only common familiarity, may not the familiarity, especially if in public, be thought too bold ? Were you not yourself lately an instance of it, to the embittering of your spirit ? How deceived as to this are not both the superior and inferior ! How often do kings lament the want of real friends to unbend with ! They themselves unbend ; but will they suffer the friends to do so too ? Lewis XV., fatigued with pomp at Versailles, retired to Marli with a chosen few to enjoy one another *en égal*. ‘ Let there be no king,’ said he, ‘ no subjects ; no restraint in conversation ; let it be as if the king were out of the room.’—‘ Charming,’ said they all ; ‘ when the cat’s away, the mice will play.’ Now the king did not like to be called a cat, and the mice became so bold, and uncereemonious, that he soon exclaimed, ‘ Ha ça, messieurs, le roi revient.’ This goes directly to the point ; or, if you still doubt, try Hastings again, and though you may not trust a rusty parson like me, trust the politer Horace,

‘ Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici,
Expertus metui. Tu dum tua navis in alto est,
Hoc age, ne mutata retrorsum te ferat aura ’.”

I owned this was a forcible authority, yet would have replied, and said something about Lord Oxford and Swift, which I had amused myself with in Sir Harry Goff’s library.

Fothergill immediately took it up, and said there was no proof that theirs was more than one of those alliances of mutual usefulness which he had mentioned.

“ Oxford,” said he, “ wanted a writer, and Swift wrote for him. By his own account, he was enlisted at first as a *humble* friend ², which did not at all suit Swift’s pride, and soon produced a quarrel ; for Harley, presuming to pay him with 50*l*. (the reward was perhaps not large enough), Swift kicked, and pouted ; though at length appeased with a Deanery, he could hold his head up better. What even then might have been the event, we don’t know, for Harley’s

¹ Epist. i. 18, thus translated by Francis :—

“ Untried, how sweet is court attendance !
When tried, how dreadful the dependence !
Yet, while your vessel ’s under sail,
Be sure to catch the flying gale.
Lest adverse winds, with rapid force,
Should bear you from your destined course.”

² “ ’Tis, let me see, three years and more,
October next it will be four,
Since Harley bid me first attend,
And chose me for a humble friend.”

SWIFT’S Imitation of Horace.

power was ruined, and himself forgotten, while Swift filled the world with his fame.—The same may be almost said of Swift and Bolingbroke. They wrote freely to one another, and amuse us with their playfulness and seeming attachment. But a fat Dean is not so much below an attainted Viscount. Both were warmly engaged in trying to pull down a common political enemy, and this alone will bind the most unequal parties together *for a time*, with hoops of brass. The chief will not only tolerate the subaltern, but, while he wants him, will make him his most familiar companion, so that their friendship shall seem that of Damon and Pythias.

“But even here observe, though his arms are open, his house is not; he may visit *you*, but not your *wife*. He will know you in the streets, and at the club, but not at court. His notice at best is confined to his single condescension to your single person, and that only as long as your usefulness continues; but to think of allowing my lady to visit your homely family, is a solecism with my lord. Once a year, perhaps, and *in the country*, with all the tag-rag of the neighbourhood, your wife and daughter may be admitted to the extraordinary condescension of the Countess, who meets them afterwards in town, and passes without knowing them.

“These are considerations, my young cousin,” continued Fothergill, “which, if I mistake not, will weigh with you, as Horace’s Epistle we quoted just now did with Lollius. That epistle was, as you know, the caution of a man who well knew the world, to a young friend just entering it; and you would do well to ponder the whole; but in particular that part of it which paints the folly of the inferior in an unequal friendship, if, to prove his disregard of the inequality, he presume to imitate his superior in eccentricity or expense.

“How fatal has this been in examples within our own time, ending in the ruin, and even death by suicide, of the subaltern; rendered more bitter by the indifference of the higher in degree, who, in the words of our Satirist, even insults and derides him.

‘Dives amicus,
Sæpe decem vitiis instructor, odit et horret,
An si non odit,—*regit.*’

“Again,

‘Meæ’ (contendere noli)
Stultitiam patiuntur opes; tibi pergula res est.
Arcta decet sanum comitem toga, desine mecum
Certare¹.’”

¹ My lord, more vicious and more great,
Views him with horror and with hate.
Think not, he cries, to live like me;
My wealth supports my vanity;
Your folly should be moderate,
Proportioned to your small estate.

FRANCIS.

Here Fothergill stopt, and these classical allusions certainly had their weight with me, both at the time and for ever after. For amply were these remarks afterwards confirmed in the world, where I have seen little men hanging on great ones, and fancying themselves part of them, but after being used, thrown neglected by. Possibly I may bring them forward in the course of these memoirs ; at present I return to my tutor, to whom I could not help observing, that the passages he had adduced from Horace, pointed not so much at friendship, as a companionship in vice.

“ You are right,” said he, “ but take a virtuous mutual regard and esteem, with great inequality of condition ; such as mine was, and is still, with Lord Castleton, though we now never see one another.”

“ Lord Castleton ! what the minister ? ” asked I.

“ Yes ! and it may instruct you to know our history. We were college friends of the same age, and seemingly of the same tastes, like you and Hastings ; that is, we loved reading, and talked of what we read, which united us much in this place. He was honourable, generous, frank, talented, and rich. I, in comparison, very poor. We both thought this nothing ; and, being sent to travel by his father, he insisted upon my accompanying him ; and as I was to give up my career here as a tutor, he offered me three hundred a year, his table, and *perfect equality*. Notwithstanding all this, I was a mere rustic in manners ; he one of the best bred men in the kingdom. Here began the rub. He was fond of me in private ; but, his fine mind being not so experienced, and his sensibility not so well disciplined, as it is now, though I will not say he was ashamed, he was awkward with me in public. I took no pains to shew, by obsequious deference, my sense of the inequality of our conditions, nor even to get rid of my rust. I gave myself up to books, and the study of mankind, where I best found it (because in an undress), in shops, markets, the bourse, and courts of justice ; while he passed his time in the palaces of princes, ministers, and ladies. Here, when I was admitted with him, as I sometimes was, though he never was what may be called disconcerted, he was not overpleased. I was not happy at this, and felt like Gray with Walpole, and we were near separating, as they did, yet without losing respect for one another. Indeed, like Walpole, he acknowledged he was in fault, and had the candour not to let me go.—On our return home, however, things altered still more. Though he kept me in his house, to assist, as he said, his reading—and complimented me on what he called my shrewdness, nay sometimes consulted me in politics, to which he gave himself up with ardour—he soon found that, from too great indifference towards the people he wished me to cultivate, or perhaps a want of sufficient ambition, he could not produce me in public as he wished. The independence of my

manners, owing to the *equal* friendship which reigned in our private apartments (in which I must do him the justice to say he never altered), was not always, or exactly, what he liked when ministers and nobles met at his table. He employed me much in literary, or rather political researches, and drawing papers founded upon them, but complained that my productions were more satirical, or at best philosophical, than serviceable. Hence, perhaps, he turned me into a mere amanuensis, which I did not like. But three hundred a year, a great house, and a great man, who was also an accomplished and real *friend*, I did not like to abandon. In time, however, we both grew less warm; he from being occupied with others more necessary to him; I, from my sense of that very circumstance. Though I continued, therefore, to dine at his table, and our mutual esteem was not interrupted, I felt too much a burthen to him, not to wish to relieve him from it, as well as myself;—and I told him so. He seemed at first uncomfortable, if not distressed; but allowed that he feared our habits, views, and occupations were too little alike to make my abode with him pleasant to myself. He owned he had too much of the ambition of the world on his part, for what he called my philosophy; and, seeing that I really longed to be where he allowed I could be more useful, as well as more happy, he did not long oppose our separation.

“‘But though I shall lose you,’ he was pleased to observe, ‘as a coadjutor, we must always remain the friends we are, and I shall continue to rely upon your assistance where I think your stores, or future position, may enable you to give it, as I know you will do.’”

“Our parting really affected me, and I ought to add, to his honour, that having, as he said, *seduced* me from my college, and made me lose much time in my favourite career, he insisted upon my continuing to receive the three hundred a year, till a living of more than that value in his gift should fall in. I declined the stipend, but accepted the promise of the living, which I now enjoy. He still often writes to me, acquaints me, sometimes in confidence, with his views of things going on, and does me the honour to consult me on literary subjects, of which he is still keenly fond. Thus, we are better friends asunder than we were together, being so dissimilar; *he*, lost in the vortex of the world where he shines; *I*, buried in my living, or college, where I am anything but unhappy.”

This recital made a deep impression upon me, and I neither wondered at my tutor’s anxiety to set before me the dangers, or at least the disadvantages, of unequal friendships, nor how he came by his experience.

“However,” said he, “you observe, I speak of *real* friendship, intrinsic, pure, and indulged for its own sake alone, as so difficult to preserve between parties that are unequal. What I have called alliances for mutual benefit are far more easy, and therefore more

common. They last as long as their usefulness lasts. If *regard* as well as respect accompany them, well ; if not, a separation when required, as is often the case, is attended with less regret. Such an alliance you might make with another, but not now with Hastings, because you have loved him. For I need not refer you to Ovid for the apophthegm,

‘ Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur,
Majestas et amor.’ ”

CHAPTER XIII.

DANGERS OF A MESALLIANCE BETWEEN A HIGH GENTLEMAN AND A LOW LADY, AND
BETWEEN A HIGH LADY AND A LOW GENTLEMAN.

Oh ! Hamlet, speak no more,
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ BUT if this take effect in male friendships,” said Fothergill, continuing his discourse, “ what must it be between the sexes ? Here a still more comfortless scene opens, especially on the part of the woman who matches below herself. Even where the man does so, though, intrenched in his superiority, he can raise a wife to his own level, yet even there a long train of (to say the best of them) unpleasant concomitants attend and mortify him at every turn. He has to reconcile his family and friends to the false step they think he has made. They look down, or he fears they look down, upon his choice ; they are angry that their own importance, perhaps fortunes, have been hurt by the match. His mother and sisters, if not very generous, criticise, and sneer ; and even his younger brothers think to enlarge their consequence by giving themselves airs.

“ If the husband is of very high rank, and there are children, they have but one parent ; at any rate, if they tolerate their mother, it is quite enough, without taxing their attentions for a number of poor or unfashionable relations, whom they at least had no part in bestowing upon themselves.

“ This is all sad, and there must be great beauty, accomplishments, and merit, in the poor wife, to be thus even condescendingly admitted into another and higher family, at the price of mortifying herself, and forgetting her own.

“ There is also another of this sort of cares, not so melancholy to the wife, but perhaps more destructive of the peace of the husband. It is when the lowborn lady is the person to give herself airs,

and flies in the face of her high-born husband, and all his family. This was felt by no less a man than Cato, the censor, who, in his old age, married a young girl of mean extraction, thinking to do what he pleased with her, I suppose out of expected gratitude. But she proved a termagant; and St. Jerome, wanting to show that those who marry poor wives in order to be quiet at home are not always sure of their mark, quotes this case of Cato in proof of his opinion."

"That I can believe," said I; "but is not your other supposition, that the poor wife is made so unhappy by her high alliance, often contradicted by facts?"

And I mentioned several marriages of peers with persons of inferior condition, of which the periodicals of the day were full.

"That there are instances of such merit," replied he, "as to overcome all this, is not to be denied; and persons of very middling rank have sometimes seemed, by their talents for representation, to have been born countesses. But these are as rare as felicitous exceptions, and, for the most part, the high husband, after the first attraction has lost its charm, finds himself plunged for the rest of his life in endless mortifications; for he has to support and countenance, for his own credit's sake, a troop of near and dear connections whom he wishes he had never seen, if he does not wish them at the devil; and who he at least feels will do him the reverse of honour.

"Thus much where the wife is really a woman of elegance of mind and of manners. But there are marriages where, from the weakness or blindness of the husband, influenced by a temporary passion, the woman may in these respects be grossly deficient. I have seen such wives, vulgar, coarse, and selfish in mind, and slatterns in person;—such wonders will caprice or a vitiated taste effect in some of us lords of the creation. Where this is the case, if the man has a spark of delicacy or sensibility left, he is exiled for life from society, where he can never show himself without shame, and 'bitter must be his portion to drink;' for it would be happier for him to be of the same nature as his wife, and both to lie down in the same sty."

"This is a picture to make one shudder," said I, "and perhaps too true."

"I assure you, it is not overcharged," said Fothergill, "even where the lady is parvenue. Now to take its converse, and let the gentleman be the one promoted——"

"But I spare you, my young cousin; for your high-hoping temper, and unfledged experience, will not easily bear the picture I could paint."

And here the Cumberland sage again stopt.

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And here the Cumberland sage again stopt.

I assured him I could bear all, and desired nothing so much as to

see the world through his clear-sighted vision. And yet I trembled; for the remembrance of Bertha unnerved me.

He saw it, and said he would be as light with me as he could. "My first appeal," observed he, "shall be to your honour. And certainly if ever honour would influence a man, it would be to prevent him from seeking to make a person he loves degrade herself."

"Degrade!" exclaimed I.

"Yes; for even could you succeed, would you not reduce Miss Hastings from her own class to yours; and without meaning at all to go beyond the etymology of the word, or make it stand, as it often does, for disgrace, would not that degrade her? Could you expect her to descend from the society of Foljambe Park, or Grosvenor Square, to follow you to your father's homestead, or through the world in the shape perhaps of that illustrious being called a tutor, or at very best a country parson? Be it, however, that your fondest dream was realized; that instead of forgetting you, as she probably has done, she was absolutely ready to go with you to the altar, and there meet the curses of her father, and all those relations whose countenance would make marriage sweet, instead of the blessings she would have a right to expect:—where would be the happy home to which you could introduce her? There could be no such home, for every thing in it would, from contrast, remind her of the height from which she had fallen, and the love of a family who loved her no longer!"

"This is severely strong," said I, and I gave a deep sigh.

"Not stronger, than true," he replied. "But, even supposing that a miracle should intervene in your favour, and that you obtained her by consent, reluctant, but still consent: or suppose that, having married without it, you are what they might call forgiven. With even this forgiveness, could you be more than endured?—think you that you would ever be received as an equal, much less as a son or brother? Your fortune and your station being where they are, must not this daughter of wealth and nobility fall to their level, and partake of their character? Could she ever be restored to that blythe and buoyant cheerfulness, of which you would have deprived her, and which you have described as the delight of her father, and the charm of her friends? Where would the freedom of her spirit fly? To her husband, you will say, and perhaps a loved progeny, but obtained at the expense of what? poverty, and the loss of the smile of the world!"

I was again sensibly moved, but he went on.

"What hour of the day, what movement could either of you make, what part of your own family could she cultivate, that would not painfully remind *her* of the height from which she had fallen, —*you*, of the alteration in her lot, perhaps in her disposition; and

all caused by your own misplaced, selfish, and too successful partiality."

I now absolutely groaned at this forcible picture, and begged him to desist.

"Not yet," said he, "for say what you please of the poetry of life, and particularly of love; deck it out in pastorals, and repeat every day the pretty song which you say once so moved you, of Lucy singing at her wheel in russet gown and apron blue; Miss Hastings was never made to turn a wheel, or wear a russet gown; or if she could wear it for your sake, she could not submit to it without flying from the world, and living in a desert. There indeed, out of reach of former habits, acquaintance, and ideas, it might be possible, and only possible, that in total oblivion of the past, life might not be made a perpetual burthen by memory; yet even there, memory would often force her way, and embitter present enjoyment by former recollections. In short, the world is an imperious world, and never forgives an attempt at rebellion."

"Alas!" said I, "I fear that is too true."

"Without therefore, steeping the senses in forgetfulness," proceeded he, "which could only be achieved by being cut off from it, it would be vain for a woman who has sunk from her station, to think herself independent of it. Every transitory or chance account of former amusements, former grandeur, and, above all, former friends, would make her heart sink at the thought of what she had been contrasted with what she was."

"Yet she might love her husband," said I, hesitatingly.

"She might, but would that reconcile her to the loss of family love? a father's fondness, for example."

"I fear not," said I, and I trembled when I thought of the mutual fondness of Mr. Hastings and his daughter.

Fothergill saw how I was affected, and went on. "These things," said he, "will have their weight spite of romance. A marquess who becomes a *bergère* for love, must either have little dignity of character, or repent and be miserable in banishment."

As a last struggle in the argument, I now asked Fothergill, if he could mention instances of this?

"A pregnant one," he replied, "in the Countess of Warwick, with no less a man than Addison; though that could scarcely be called a *mésalliance*, for, in the end, he was Secretary of State. That union was not happy, because, as was said, the Countess could never forget (perhaps never forgive), that her second husband had been her son's tutor. And yet, no doubt, when the great lady first made this stoop, she was actuated, as she thought, by a most generous devotion, as well as admiration, for a person certainly the ornament of his age. Still it availed little for poor Addison; and I cannot do better, as an illustration of the subject,

than refer you to what Johnson says of it, in his life of that illustrious man."

At this, taking down his Lives of the Poets, he read as follows :—

"This year (1716), he married the Countess Dowager of Warwick, whom he had solicited by a long and anxious courtship, perhaps with behaviour not very much unlike that of Sir Roger, to his disdainful widow; and who, I am afraid, diverted herself often by playing with his passion. He is said to have first known her by becoming tutor to her son. In what part of his life he obtained the recommendation, or how long, and in what manner, he lived in the family, I know not. His advances, at first, were certainly timorous, but grew bolder as his reputation and influence increased; till at last the lady was persuaded to marry him, on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused, to whom the Sultan is reported to pronounce, 'daughter, I give thee this man for thy slave.' The marriage made no addition to his happiness; it neither found them, nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herself entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her son '."

"This is surely enough for the argument," concluded Fothergill, "though there are other cases which I have not been without observing, and which, in fact, first prompted this opinion of mine."

I entreated to know them.

"Why frequently," he replied, "some of our most settled maxims of life arise from accidental circumstances. When I was the companion of Lord Castleton, a picture of *mésalliance* forcibly struck me, in the person of his own sister, Lady Harriet Longueville, who exchanged that name for Baggs."

"Baggs!" exclaimed I, "what a name!" and I thought with complacency of the De Cliffords.

"Plebeian, certainly," said Fothergill, "nor was Mr. Baggs in his condition much better than his name, though he was the son of honest parents respectable in their line of life, his father, in fact, having a place in the Lord Mayor's court. As for himself, the best that can be said of him was that he was not disreputable from any vice, and had a certain coarse vigour of character; the worst, that being tolerably educated, he had conceived too high an idea of his own abilities, which he supposed would ensure him fortune whenever he pleased. In the meantime, his reading gave him notions far beyond himself; for he practised the sentimental and romantic, with much contempt for those whom he called common-place persons."

* She was a Middleton, daughter of Sir Thomas. Who that reflects upon the universal fame of Addison, and feels him in his delightful literature one of the benefactors of mankind, and at the same time is puzzled to find out the family name of the wife who thus looked down upon him, but must laugh such nonsense to scorn.

I thought my good tutor looked too significantly at me while thus describing the hero Mr. Baggs; but I contented myself with saying, "And was it such a person as this who obtained an earl's sister? Ah! she could not have been like Bertha! Perhaps she was plain and unattractive; perhaps half-witted or uneducated; or perhaps a despairing old maid."

"Far from them all," said Fothergill. "She was rather handsome; had had the usual education of her rank; was accomplished and popular, and though not in her teens, was by no means antiquated. Of her wit, I will not say much, for whatever it was, she showed it not here; it was all lost and overlaid by a love of romance, by which she too was bit, and which, in fact, was what occasioned the step which ruined her,"

"She is, then, ruined?" said I.

"I think so. But listen. While her brother, over whose house she had presided, was abroad, she resided with an aunt, an old and infirm lady, who, during the summer, shut herself up with her niece in a monotonous park in Gloucestershire; and in this park, where she had full liberty to range, Lady Harriet one eventful morning met this young swain reading aloud to himself. It was poetry, and he read well. He seemed confused at seeing her—shut the book in a hurry—feared he was a trespasser—was taken by the beauty of the park—a stranger that lodged in the village—et cetera, et cetera. The lady was pleased—thought it an adventure; said that reading out aloud in a park to one's self must be very delightful; in fine, gave him leave to repeat his walk whenever he pleased, and went home and told her aunt that she had met a love of a man, who, she was sure, had a most beautiful mind. The next day they met again, and again after that. They found they had both of them beautiful minds, akin of course to one another, and how much was that above the dross of the world! Besides, though Lady Harriet was not richly endowed, she was her own mistress, and told him so."

"Upon this hint he spake," and was accepted before either of them had inquired after their means of subsistence—a thing Mr. Baggs said he spurned;—which was lucky, for the honest clerk, his father, could not give him a pound. The old aunt could oppose nothing to this; but it was a sad blow to Lord Castleton, when he returned to England. His pride was hurt, and his anxiety for his sister alarmed. He urged all that could be so well urged against the measure—poverty, disparity of condition, loss of caste, ultimate misery. But in vain; her eyes were still blinded, her honour pledged, and the Lady Harriet Longueville became Lady Harriet Baggs."

"Yet the result is to come," said I.

"It is not happy, as you may suppose. Lord Castleton, at first

resentful, paid his sister her 8,000*l.*, upon the interest of which, with her husband, she subsisted as well as she could for some months, exchanging her brother's fine mansion, of which she no longer could do the honours, for a lodging, neither very large nor very clean, in which, however, she expected to be visited by her friends. They came once, saw her husband, pitied her, took leave, and never came again. Lord Castleton, relenting, received her sometimes by herself, and sometimes with her husband, whose high pretensions and forwardness by no means conciliated him, but for whom, to keep them from starving, he obtained a small place, upon which they now barely exist.

“ Her society is almost already reduced to the aunts, sisters, and cousins, of Mr. Baggs, remarkable only for familiar vulgarity, and who, transported to call an earl's daughter their relation, never leave her to the solitude she now courts, as her only relief; and the certainty of finding her surrounded with these coarse people keeps off the very few friends who would still wish to notice her.

“ Thus exiled from all she most loved—lost to her former state, and despoiled of all that can cheer her (for her husband has long ceased to do so)—she drags on a melancholy existence, in which her only subject for meditation is unceasing self-blame. When last I saw her, it was in a small, dirty, and mean house, near her brother's, who often feeds her from his larder. She has a child much neglected, from perpetual sorrow; her husband can neither give her consequence nor receive it from her; and her spirit is so broken, that she seems to have lost the desire as well as power to retrieve her condition. My tale is done.”

“ And a melancholy one,” observed I; “ enough to terrify a bolder man than I; and yet I cannot help thinking that I am not Mr. Baggs.”

I said this firmly, as if it was in answer to his case.

“ And pray, as to essentials, in what are you different?” asked my tutor, looking very tutor-like indeed.

“ I am a De Clifford,” answered I, “ and not a Baggs.”

“ Aye, there it is,” returned he, with almost anger. “ I wish the name were at the bottom of the sea, for it is perpetually haunting you as if the very ghost of your ancestor Sir William.

‘ The times have been

That when the brains were out the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools.’

“ So it is with you. You have not a word to say for yourself; you are beaten as flat in the argument as the Lords Clifford were killed regularly in battle some hundred years ago; yet you make

them rise again, to push me from my stool. As if the name would give you an estate, or make your father other than a farmer."

"My father is a grand juryman, in the county of York," said I, "as well as Mr. Hastings, and not a lord mayor's official,"

"And why not add that he is the son-in-law of a Saxon duke, of a sovereign house, and that Mr. Hastings sells his own corn in Weatherby market. Upon my word, my Lord De Clifford, you are a very great fool."

With these words he left me.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOLJAMBE IS EXPELLED.—HIS BEHAVIOUR UPON IT.—A PRACTICAL DISSERTATION
UPON PRIDE.

What is the cause, Laertes
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?

SHAKSPEARE.—*Hamlet.*

PETULANT as I dare say I have appeared in the course of these memoirs, I was not in the least affronted with my kinsman-tutor for the appellation he gave me at the end of the last chapter. On the contrary, he had not been gone ten minutes, before the musing I fell into, the consequence of his portentous story, made me very much inclined to think he was right.

This musing lasted during the greater part of the day; and I fell into as many resolutions as humours,—according as love for Bertha, indignation at her brother, prudence, or a spirit of independence, became uppermost. At one time I arrayed myself in stoicism, and would be a Cato; at another, I was all dignity and Clifford-pride towards the whole family of Foljambe Park. But this soon gave way before the sweet beauty and frankness of Bertha, who had never shewn pride to any one. In the end this prevailed; I could not part with my feelings, and would not if I could.

In the midst of this, a trifling question obtruded itself—Had Bertha any, and what feelings towards *me*? Strange to say, I had never very seriously asked this before, so richly did I deserve the epithet which my tutor had bestowed upon me, and so true his remark, that "this love fools us passing well."

Thinking I would settle the point, I took a walk by the side of the Cherwell. Here, except that she had commended my dancing, said she should *miss us all* when we went away, and hoped she should see me again with Charles, I had not a breath to flatter myself with that I could be remembered, much less favoured. With

that Charles, too, I had never been asked to return, and was now about to break for ever.

Nor did her high German as well as English descent fail to be thought of. Was ever fool, therefore, more deluded by his heart, when I yet felt myself clinging to this delicious passion, in the very moment that I was uttering to myself the most fervid resolves to banish it for ever?

But hope has well been called "the most powerful of all tempters," and, like the great tempter of old, it can sometimes assume the form of an angel of light, the better to deceive its votaries; and if a sailor who had sunk full twenty fathoms deep never lost his hope till he lost his senses, what wonder if I would not forego this sweet friend of man in a mild and blissful evening, at the blissful age of nineteen, and on the bank of a blissful river.

'Tis true, my tongue breathing philosophy and resolution, all the time my heart was beating rebellion, reminded me of what I had heard of St. Austin, who, while preferring prayers to be strengthened against carnal pleasures, secretly hoped he should not be heard. But such is the wayward nature of man—not, I fear, confined to his youth.

In the midst of this struggle, I was critically met by Fothergill, from whom I expected another scold, but it was lost in the news he had to tell. He had evidently something important to communicate.

"Lad," said he, "I called you a hard name when I last left you—but let that pass; for though I thought you what I wont repeat, you are at least not so mad and headstrong as your friend there,"—and he pointed to Christ Church.

"What has happened?" asked I.

"Only expelled, for not submitting to be rusticated; that's all."

I felt my cheeks immediately suffused, and my heart to beat high; for I found I still loved Foljambe, though still resolving to separate. Fothergill went on.

"This froward spark, who thinks himself above all the world (you may guess what he thinks of you), did not chuse to submit to the punishment awarded to him for disobedience of orders, so broke prison,

'And to his general sent a brave defiance.'"

"Do you mean," said I, "that he has executed his threal, and has quitted his college for ever?"

"I cannot exactly say," answered Fothergill, "that he has quitted his college, because his college has quitted him. For, before he could give his intended notice, though after he broke loose, he found himself expelled, *propter contumaciam*. In fact, having, as I said, left his prison without leave, his chief called for the book of battels, and struck him out of it with his own hand."

“Lamentable!” cried I. “What will his family say?”

“That he has been rightly served,” observed Fothergill.

“And how does he bear it?”

“Like all disgraced men of noble spirit; of course, triumphs. He has already made a great party, who canvass the measure with no good-will to the high-minded chief who has thus asserted himself, and whom they blame for tyrannizing for tyranny’s sake, as Mr. Hastings was intending to leave college altogether. He so represented it to the dean, in a letter, who returned it with this note on the passage in the margin: ‘In your situation, you could not have been allowed to quit, till you had submitted to the punishment awarded and deserved.’”

“And what is thought of it?”

“The town is split, of course. By one party, the deed is deemed a detestable act of power; by the other, a firm measure of justice. May I ask your opinion?”

“I am too grieved to give a free one,” said I; “for I still love my schoolfellow.”

“Love him, if you please,” said Fothergill; “but let not that blind you to his egotism, his insolence, or his pride. It is not, nor it cannot come to good.—*Hunc tu Romane caveto.*”

Here, being joined by two or three fellows of Queen’s, Mr. Fothergill left me to pursue my meditations on the banks of the Cherwell; and meditate I did, bitterly and deeply. For, with all my wrongs, I was anxious for Foljambe’s fate; though that, considering his position in the world, an only son, and great heir of a great family, and so commanding every where but at Oxford, left me in a little time without much anxiety on his account.

But when I thought of the proof this gave, in one so young, of a proud, overbearing, aristocratic, and haughty spirit, the total incompatibility of a friendship between him and me, except in the character of patron and follower, which our former equality forbade, struck me in unanswerable force. I found my sagacious tutor more and more right.

I gave the whole night to these reflections. It was the first great disappointment I had endured; but my spirit of independence coming to my aid, I resolved to bear it like a man; and as Hastings left the university the very next day, I had more leisure and opportunity to recover. Here his absence, indeed, was of service, not merely by taking from my vision the person who so constantly and anxiously filled it, but in bringing to my notice, and thence to my regard, others who, though not of such a bold flight of character, or of such high birth and connection, equalled, if not exceeded him, in most of those qualities which really sweeten life. Some were scholars; some men of genius—many of feeling; none forgot themselves; all bore their faculties meekly.

This did not fail to have its effect, and I was at length brought to believe that there might be other gentlemen, as well as other gifted persons, than were confined to Christ Church, and that Oxford might contain respectable, lively, and amiable persons, though Hastings was not there.

This was encouraged by my tutor, who bantered me for supposing there could be only one man in the whole university worthy of being my friend.

In the words of old Cassius, protesting against the exclusive right of Cæsar to fill the eye of Rome, he often twitted me with—

“ When went there by an age since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than one man.”

And when I thought, as I sometimes did, of Hastings' taunt about the “ animals I herded with at Queen's,” he would ask, if the two Addisons, father and son, both of them Queen's men, were animals to be ashamed of.

I loved Addison too well for this to fail of its effect, and the absence of Hastings, together with the merit of others whom I was now not unwilling to cultivate, taught me a useful lesson, that though the hare and many friends is not a desirable, perhaps is a ridiculous character, yet to give one's self up to one engrossing interest, to the exclusion of all others, is reducing us to a state of dependence almost as onerous as that of a real hanger-on. I daily, therefore, felt my heart-burning about Hastings subside, and opened my mind to the acquisition of other intimacies.

Among these, one with Mr. Granville, of All Souls, a very enthusiastic person, to whom I was introduced in form by Fothergill, as a brother enthusiast, claimed the first, and indeed a very high place. For though he was some years my senior, and perhaps the most accomplished man in the university, he was so good as at first to tolerate and protect, and afterwards to feel a kindness for me, for which I was always grateful.

Granville was a beautiful classic, which study fed a most romantic disposition, carried to its height by a taste for poetry and music—in both which he was no ordinary artist;—for some of his poems and melodies, breathing delicate love, reminding me then of Tibullus, and afterwards of Petrarch, and set by himself to “ Lydian measures,” had been published and admired in our musical university.

My own feeling for both these charming arts was, perhaps, what first recommended me to the favour of Granville; but my respect for him was infinitely enhanced by his relationship to the family which had engrossed my all of interest: for his mother being a sister of Mr. Hastings, he was by consequence cousin to Bertha; and his interest with me on that account may be divined.

There were many other characters with whom I became ac-

quainted, and met afterwards in the world, and whom I may hereafter introduce in the course of these memoirs; but Granville, having had a more intimate and earlier influence on my career, which continued to the very end of it, I have stopped to describe him here. I now return to my narrative.

Left to myself, and relieved from the nightmare which my anxieties about Foljambe had hitherto imposed upon me, I began to breathe more freely, and listened more complacently to my good kinsman's lectures about Bertha. I found, however, that in regard to both her and her brother, I was embarrassed with a difficulty in my philosophy, arising, it should seem, out of a liberalism, or perhaps causing that liberalism (I don't know which), of which, notwithstanding my hatred of mob rule and contempt for mob popularity, nay, spite of my respect for the blood of the Cliffords and Bardolfes, I had no inconsiderable share. The following proposition engaged me.

Is that a sound state of society, or can there be perfect freedom, when either by law there is a privileged class of men, or from custom or insuperable prejudice, a tolerated one, which shall be allowed to usurp a dominion (though only in their own minds) over any other classes? If we are all fellow-citizens, or fellow-subjects, and have equal rights under the law, can it be endured that any one person, or set of persons, shall be allowed *even to think* themselves higher than others, so as to act the exclusive towards them, and draw a magic circle round themselves, into which no others shall have power to enter?

The maxim of

“ Nul n'aura de l'esprit,

“ Hors nous et nos amis,”

forms an aristocracy in literature. It is the same, or worse, in the aristocracy of fashion, because the proscribed in the last have less power to defend themselves.

How is this to be resisted? Not surely by flight! Not by saying the grapes are sour, and therefore I won't taste them. No; let me prove and feel my right to taste them, and then throw them away if I please. This, and this alone, I thought was the perfection of freedom; and a desideratum, fully as necessary to be accomplished in our moral, as the most desirable reform in our political constitution.

This was my problem, and I own the solution of the whole of Euclid would have been nothing to it. It was in vain that I drew up myself, or imagined for my tutor, all the fine arguments that philosophy or magnanimity could supply, by which to render one of the rejected perfectly at ease as to the usurpation of the rejectors. I criticised all the fine people I had seen in the university; I found

one uglier, another more awkward, another meaner, a fourth a greater blockhead, and some even as ill-dressed, as those they affected to keep at a distance. They had all the little passions and foolish rivalries, the strifes, heart-burnings, envy, hatred, and malice that we had; nor were their manners in anywise more polished. But they kept all these among themselves; they would not condescend to be even rude to those below them in caste; on the contrary, if forced by chance into any communication, their demeanour was marked by the most freezing distance. In fact, it was a total proscription of intercourse which they affected, and this was what, both puzzled and annoyed me.

What made the puzzle greater, there were several among these chosen few who had no more right than myself, from birth, parentage, or education, and I had almost said fortune, to the admission which they had received among these sacred ranks. They must themselves have

“Wondered how the devil they got there.”

It is inconceivable how all this engaged my inquiries, and, I grieve to add, affected my tranquillity.

I heard from some of my higher acquaintance, and read in the papers, of a sort of king of fashion and exclusiveness in London, whose nod was law as to company, and for whose countenance as an *arbiter elegantiarum* more struggles were made than there used to prevail for the empire of Germany. He dealt out degrees in *Bon Ton*, as our convocation did in learning. Any one on whom he smiled could be admitted any where; he on whom he frowned could show himself no where. Well, he was as rich and sumptuous as fastidious; but what was his *right* to be fastidious? What was he above the commonest man? barring rank and fortune, and that was no merit of his own.

Knowing nothing of him, and not likely to do so, it is remarkable how I plagued myself about this Lord A——, as a riddle of human nature. For I had never heard of a single superior quality in any one thing which belonged to his character. He had no wit, nor indeed more than the commonest knowledge of any thing; neither conversation, nor agreeableness. But he made a profit of his dullness, by making it assume the character of reserve, which humbugged “the general,” who thought themselves in the third heaven if invited to his balls; and even there his major-domo would have acted his part quite as well as himself.

I resolved to bring this whole subject, Lord A—— and all, before my sagacious Mentor.

“I believe,” said Mr. Fothergill, after I had opened myself to him, “that no ingenuous youth of any mind, or sense of independence, but has been at one time or other affected in the same

way as yourself; and the impression is more or less forcible, and lasts a longer or shorter time, according to the temperament, sanguine or phlegmatic, of the patient."

"Patient!" cried I.

"Yes! for is not this a mental disease? Does it not for the most part proceed from both pride and weakness in the complainant? and are not both these diseases?"

"If you make that out, yes."

"Why, what but pride or weakness in yourself could make you feel them an annoyance in another? For I suppose, I need not ask you whether the usurpation you complain of is not pride and weakness?"

"Certainly; and it is, as such, absolutely contemptible."

"Then, I think, we need go no further; for why should you be annoyed with what you think absolutely contemptible?"

This was a hit; but I did not want the subject to be so let off; I wanted a little more of the details of the demonstration which I was sure this keen observer knew well how to furnish; and I told him I was not satisfied.

"Why," said he, "here is a demonstration, or rather illustration, ready to our hands;" and he pointed to a peacock (we were in Maudlin Walk) which was strutting in the meadows close by; his tail spread, all over eyes and spangles, sparkling in the sun, the most complete, puffed-up coxcomb that could be seen.

"Now, what would you say to yourself," continued Fothergill, "if you could be angry at that fool for giving himself such airs. See how he struts by you, absolutely bursting with disdain; yet you are unmoved, except it be to laugh."

"The comparison is not just," said I, "for the peacock is not a man."

"No; but a man may be a peacock."

Another hit, for so I felt it, and was silent.

"Now, when you are most annoyed," proceeded he, "by the usurpation you complain of, you have only to fancy a truth—that the gentleman and lady usurpers are peacocks, and you may laugh at them as you do at this self-sufficient fowl."

"Very good," I returned; "but pray tell me how it is, that common dunghill fowls sometimes become peacocks too, and though they have little or no tails, are allowed to spread themselves to the sun, and strut in company with those beautiful birds, to the great annoyance of their modest fellow dunghills, whom they treat as if they had never known them."

"Your metaphor," returned Fothergill, "is rather elaborate and 'long drawn out,' though it has not much of 'linked sweetness.' But if you mean to ask how men of no birth, or distinguished connexions, and not remarkable for any shining abilities, genius, or

powers of usefulness, come to be enlisted in the ranks of fashion, I, who am of no fashion myself, am little able to tell, particularly since, as far as I have observed, there are various steps in this ladder of ambition."

"Pray enlighten me by mentioning them."

"Why, first, a most determined intrepidity of assurance, or (we may as well call it by its right name) immovable impudence, but directed by *tact*. Next, great suppleness, amounting to toadyism, though adroitly concealed. Thirdly, if not first, a most lavish expense in every possible way that can contribute to the amusement of the real sovereigns of the kingdom of fashion. Lastly (though that is a dangerous venture, and often fails), a most daring assumption of the envied crown, and a most impenetrable self-confidence in maintaining possession. This has been known to succeed in the instance of one or two great and original geniuses, but has most frequently been attended with the fate of the artist in 'Rasselas,' who attempted to fly, but failed, and was laughed at."

"Laughed at, I suppose," observed I, "not for the attempt, but the failure. But what if he succeed? Have I not reason to complain of the inequality of mankind, that has put it in the power of a set of men, whom you yourself call fools, to exclude me from the power of——"

"Being a fool too," interrupted Fothergill, in his tranchant manner.

"If they were all fools," returned I, rallying, "there would be little difficulty; but some of them have the character of men of talents, and are distinguished in society."

"Not the less fools, quoad our question," returned my opponent, "if they are what you say, and in so far, not the less to be laughed at, whatever their rank. But pray observe, that I am not myself such a fool as to run into a common-place, vulgar, unjust, and silly rhapsody against persons of real fashion, who must always be also persons of real distinction. I know my place, and, knowing it, respect my superiors in rank and power, and acknowledge them as such. It is only against persons so inferior in mind as to be content to play the lion among asses, and plume themselves on mere fortuitous advantages which depend not on themselves; it is these, or their upstart copyists, against whom I point my shafts. The last, ashamed of their origin, think to conceal it by false grandeur, and, above all, by an affected contempt for those whom they have left behind. These are absolutely below notice; and, in regard to those who have better claims on our respect, if they forfeit them, be assured it is only your own cowardice, or at least a cowardly sense of inferiority, that makes it troublesome to you."

"Aye! but if I am *really* inferior?"

"Inferior in what? Grant that you are so in birth, fortune, and

even in talents, if you will—must there not be inequality wherever there is man?—but till you can show that inequality in these points produces inequality in happiness, or the care of heaven, you can show no *real* superiority in their possessors.”

“With you, then, servant and master are equal?”

“In my view of it—that is, as regards happiness, respectability, and the care of heaven—yes! As relative terms—that is, as regards command and obedience—no!”

“Is the servant, then, as respectable as his master?”

“In those feelings of respect, caused by the sense of power, no.—In deference for a man perfect in his duty (if he is so), in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him, indubitably yes.—At any rate, even in the case of master and servant, if the master *plume* himself on his relative superiority, he is a fool, and even the servant may laugh at him, though in his sleeve. Do you think *Æsop* did not often laugh at *Xanthus*, or *Epictetus* at *Epaphroditus*? Suppose these two masters had been peacocks, or exclusives, would not these slaves, who were so much their superiors in sense, have despised them?”

“Yes; but I am supposing men not inferior in sense, but really gifted, and well-bred.”

“You suppose a contradiction; for no man of sense will despise a person not despicable; and no really well-bred man would make another, though his inferior, *feel* his inferiority. It is only your people themselves of an equivocal caste—not with certainty defined and acknowledged—who, from very fear of their own place, intrench themselves in distance and superciliousness. Men and women of really high consideration can *afford* to be gracious; if they think they cannot, they are really poor, and you are richer than they. At best, they are mere spoiled children, and as such should be treated, and laughed at like our peacock here.

“Then as to your refinement in the art of self-tormenting—your resolve, that a man shall not even *think* you beneath him, though he shew it not—if so, how will you find it out? Upon my word you are as ingeniously bent upon picking a quarrel as *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, ‘Sir, you lie.’—‘Sir, how can that be, when I have not spoken a word?’—‘Sir, a man may think a lie as well as tell one, and I insist upon your fighting me.’”

I own I felt this sarcasm; but, not to lose any part of what I wanted, I asked, “Will you let me suppose a case?”

“Willingly.”

“The Earl of A———”

“What of him?”

“Every one talks of him as a demi-god. ‘The glass of fashion. The observed of all observers.’”

“Yes! but observe,” said *Fothergill*, “only *for* his fashion, and

the fashion only for his earldom and his fêtes—circumstances altogether adventitious, having nothing to do with himself. To go on with your passage, though nursed in courts, he has not the ‘cour-tier’s eye,’ much less the ‘soldier’s sword,’ or the ‘scholar’s tongue;’ least of all is he

‘The rose and expectancy of the fair state.’

In truth, if he had been born in ordinary life, he would be a mighty ordinary fellow. I used to see him at Lord Castleton’s, and took measure of him, I assure you. Let me not, however, do him injustice. It seemed to me that he had almost talents enough to rival Gillows in arranging a ball-room, and Negri¹ in marshalling a supper; which is no small merit. Luckily, he was ‘*born great* ;’ but compare him with another peer, who has ‘*achieved greatness*’ and really *is* the ‘observed of all observers,’—and mark his insignificance.

“To wind up my two peers—the one is the saviour and glory of his country—the other, like his brother exclusives, *fruges consu-mere nati*; the one, the noble, the natural, Hotspur; the other, the ‘certain lord,’ neat, trimly dress’d, who

‘Talked so like a waiting gentlewoman.’”

“But, after all, why have you mentioned Lord A——?”

“Merely because I am told he guards his nobility with a triple line of exclusiveness, and is more difficult of access than the king himself. I want to know if this ought to be, or can be borne.”

“And why not, if he is really weak enough to think it adds to his consequence, instead, as it does, of diminishing it? But what is that to you or me? For my part, though no cynic, I think of Diogenes sometimes, and wish he could meet this eminent person, that he might reply to him as he did to a supercilious Athenian exclusive, who affected to despise him.

“‘You stink of garlic,’ said the Athenian—‘and you of musk,’ returned the cynic.”

Here the conversation went off to other things, but I never forgot it, and it eventually did me good, both at Oxford and in the world. In conjunction, too, with his other lectures, it went far to confirm my actual feeling as to Hastings, and my growing independence of his whole family. I was soon to return into Yorkshire, and I was resolved, when I should be so much nearer to them, to shew that I had recovered my liberty.

Bold in my philosophy, I felt confident even as to Bertha; we shall see with what reason.

¹ The predecessor of Gunter.

CHAPTER XV.

I GO HOME FOR THE LONG VACATION, AND JOIN MY FATHER AT YORK ASSIZES—SEE BERTHA ON THE ROAD.—MY MEETINGS WITH THE FAMILY AFTERWARDS.—GREAT CHANGE IN FOLJAMBE, AND CONSEQUENT MORTIFICATIONS; BUT MY LOVE FOR BERTHA IS ONLY INCREASED.

This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

THE long vacation having now begun, I prepared to return home. A branch coach was to take me into the high north road, where another, more direct, was to lodge me at Ferry Bridge. Here my father promised to send me his lad-of-all-work, who upon these occasions was furnished with a groom's coat, of blue hunter's cloth, with yellow cape and cuffs, (the colours of the old Clifford arms), for the sake of preserving some remains of respectability in the faded family.

Faded that family certainly was, almost as much as the livery itself, which was only afforded once a year. This lad was to bring me an old spavined horse, on which my father used generally to ride into York, when he attended the grand jury,—whence he was to forward it to me at Ferry Bridge, and I join him the next day.

All this fell out accordingly, and I mounted, not much in spirits, although returning after a long absence to a family whom I loved, and who loved me. Possibly my approach to the neighbourhood of Foljambe Park may have instilled a little melancholy into me.

There were two roads from Ferry Bridge to York; one on the left, as soon as you crossed the bridge, by which you would pass the very gates of Foljambe; the other to the right, the beaten road by Tadcaster. The last was by far the best, and most frequented; the first the most picturesque, because hilly and overlooking the river.

I own I had at first inclined to the Foljambe road; but recollecting my Oxford resolutions in regard to separating myself entirely from the family, I rejected it with disdain, and heroically took the Tadcaster way. "Hastings shall see," said I to myself, "that I am not the abject wretch he thinks me."

This effort lasted for near half a mile; when, the way growing rough, the country flat and dreary, and the river road (that is, the one leading by Foljambe) looking most inviting, I again communed with myself, and thought, that if really there was no comparison for pleasantness between the roads, it was downright cowardice to take the least agreeable, merely to avoid a place which was no longer

of consequence to me. The way lay all along by the river, and I loved to look at a river. For these causes, no doubt, I retraced my steps to the end of the town, and took the route by Foljambe.

As I proceeded, I shortened my pace, for I fell into a reverie, in which, instead of pursuing the turns and windings of the river, which had thus seduced me out of my way, I was rapt in meditation upon all the eventful scenes that had passed since I first had made acquaintance with this interesting region. I asked myself what I had gained since I had left it, particularly at Oxford, or if I had gained anything in knowledge of books?—what as to mankind? or, if of mankind, what as to happiness? and in this last respect, I am afraid the account was a losing one.

These thoughts dwelt with me more and more as I found myself advancing into the well-known precincts of the park, till the high and gilt vanes of the roofs, which, after all, I felt contained all that was worth living for on earth, met my view. I started, as if from a dream, at the discovery of a truth, painful to me, after all my resolutions; for I found, that to continue lingering on the confines of this forbidden land was destruction. I determined therefore to get free as soon as possible, and prepared to pass the great gates at a gallop.

I was prevented, by their being suddenly thrown open, to allow egress to a landau and six, full of company, with three out-riders, which moved briskly through them, and took the road to York. It was the carriage of the sheriff of the county, proceeding in state to the assizes; for in those days, as indeed in the present, the sheriffs of this great county made it a point of etiquette to vie with one another in the grandeur of their equipage.

The present sheriff, to whom the carriage belonged, was a great landed squire—Mr. Mansell, Mr. Hastings' brother-in-law, and Bertha's uncle—whose house being in a distant part of the county, he had, from its proximity to the city, taken up his abode at the park during the assizes.

In an instant all my philosophy was put to flight. For, having reined up my horse to let the landau pass, with an accuracy that could not be mistaken, I saw that Bertha was there. What was more, she saw and knew me, and recognised me with a look which thrilled me. The sparkle of her eye, which had so bereaved me of my senses twelve months before, seemed to flash with new and increased lustre, and her cheek, always blooming, was now more rosy than ever with a suffusion of surprise, as I supposed, at seeing me so unexpectedly in that spot.

Of her general improvement in looks, I can give no idea. The lovely girl had matured into a still more lovely woman; her shape more graceful than ever, more than ever set off by her attire, always, as I have related, so graceful.

That she knew me was plain, exclusive of the look I have de-

scribed; for as the carriage rolled on, I could perceive two gentlemen leaning over the sides, looking back at me, one of whom I took for Mr. Hastings himself; the other, a young man in appearance, I thought was Charles.

My confusion at the whole vision (for such it appeared) I shall never forget. All notion of galloping was at an end. I came to a dead stop, and sat motionless and almost senseless on my horse, till the carriage was out of sight, which it soon was, and I left to recover as I could.

Alas! what became of my philosophy? Let those who ever really loved answer. What a change can one little minute make in a man's firmest resolves! What then, in mine, which were none of the firmest? The best, or the worst (I don't know which), was, that I turned sophist upon this occasion, and philosophized the other way. I found that I had been a sad coward in thinking of flight. I ought to have braved the danger, to have any thing like a triumph, and I resolved to do so still. Bertha, or Bertha's father, had never changed towards me; it was a duty I owed to common politeness as well as gratitude to wait upon them; and this I determined to do as soon as I reached York. Whatever, our reason, how do our inclinations cheat us!

Behold me now in the ancient, and, for the present, crowded city of York, amidst hundreds of busy creatures, drawn together by all that could impel men to congregate; care, anxiety, vanity; alarm for property, alarm for life, curiosity; pleasure, ambition, duty! Nor was ostentation the least among the motives of the crowds who visited the town for the activity and splendour displayed within it. Yet was I uninterested and unawed by any thing I saw; dogged; silent; thoughtful; rapt; in short, alone in crowds.

I was received by my father with his usual affection and plainness; but he put off detailed or lengthy communication for the moment, having been summoned to the Castle on assize business, and left me for the present alone. Being thus my own master, in conformity with the brave resolution I had taken to present myself to the Hastings' family, I sought the inn where the sheriff had put up, which was soon found, and taking my station in the yard, the mere sight of his horses, panting as they were rubbed down, after their rapid exertions, caused me a thrill from the associations which they bred, surprising even to myself. When a young man, and still more I suppose when a boy, is in love, what trifles, what feathers may not give him pleasure, or pain!

I met Mr. Hastings' own man in the yard, but he did not seem to recognise me. He did not move his hat, and I was angry. But Mrs. Margaret, Bertha's own woman, of whom I formerly made honourable mention, crossing also, with a band-box in her hand, dropped me a courtesy, nay, saluted me by name, and said, her

master and Miss Bertha would be quite glad to see me. Mrs. Margaret was plain, and seared with the small-pox. I never before thought her otherwise, but her cheek now seemed absolutely smooth.

But Foljambe himself now appeared. He had seen me from a gallery which went round the inn yard, and descended, whether to greet me kindly or not, I did not know, but his presence filled me with an undefinable compound of feelings. I had still good-will towards him, and my sense of supposed affronts having been diminished by time and absence, I felt my old regard revive. Nor did I mind his quizzing me, or the illustrious Rozinante, as he called him, on which he had seen me on the road.

"He must be blood itself," said he, pertly, "or he would never have brought you here so soon."—Mem.; I was here an hour after them.

Though I was nettled at this, I hoped it was mere Christ Church flippancy, and at least it was better than the reserve and stiffness which my fears had anticipated.

"I assure you," added he with vivacity, "we all, and Bertha in particular, thought you a very fine horseman, and your horse quite knowing."

At the sound of that name I reddened to the ears, and though so full of her image, could hardly stammer out the usual inquiries after all the family.

"Why my father," said Foljambe, "is well, and as for Bertha, she is grown quite a woman, and, needs must, for she already begins to flirt; but I tell her she must wait till she has done with that old Ma'amselle La Porte, and is really come out, which she is not yet. The old virgin opposed her coming here on that account, but her cousin, Frank Mansell, who is to dance with her to-night at the ball, as the son of the sheriff, carried it hollow."

Had I been struck with thunder I do not think I could have felt a greater agony of heart than these words occasioned. I was absolutely sick, and looked so, I suppose, for my friend asked me if I was unwell. "Indeed," said he, "you were always a tender one, and though you have, no doubt, fed well among those bluff beef-eaters (I must not call them animals) at Queen's, you are not more rubicund than you were formerly. I wish you had been at Eton; a bottle of claret at the Christopher, and a run with the King's hounds, would have done you more good than all the sturdy Crackenthorpe lectures, by which you profited so much in your learning, and so little in your health."

I liked this less and less, but particularly when he continued, "I suppose the old lord (for so he always designated my father) designs you for some quiet, moping profession, and I have no doubt you will make a capital parson."

From all this I gathered that the punishment, as I in my simplicity supposed it, which he had undergone in being expelled for

contumacy, was no punishment at all; and that he had settled the matter with his father, or his tone would not have been so unchanged. The fact was, he gloried in it.

The flippancy of Foljambe's speech, however, augured no good to my hopes that our friendship might revive, which the proximity to Bertha now made me wish, particularly when, with something like former frankness, and putting his arm within mine, he said, "Come, you must go and pay your duty to the governor (his phrase for his father), whose horror at the growing insubordination of young people will be at its height if you neglect to come to the *levée* he always holds at the assizes; and besides, the princess, my sister, who wishes already to enlarge the number of her subjects beyond country cousin Frank, expects you to pay court to her, notwithstanding Rozinante."

Whether this was a true account as to his sister, or a mere coinage of a light moment to divert himself, the very notion that I was *expected* to pay court to the dear and noble Bertha thrilled my very heart, and I followed him up the great inn stairs to their lodging-room, with such emotions as the reader, if he is a "decayed gentleman," and has ever been in love with a person beyond himself, may imagine.

But here, whatever might have been my uncertainties about Charles, every cloud, every doubt, every thought derogatory to the perfection of Bertha's delightful nature, was dissipated. On seeing me at first, gladness seemed to leap into her countenance. The dazzle of her eye, which ever in her denoted an hilarity that springs from the most perfect innocence, absolutely illuminated, not merely herself, but all about her. She looked surprised, certainly, but also pleased, and (as I thought, but was not sure) blushed.

My chains were strong enough before, but this look, indescribable in its effect, would have rivetted them, had it been necessary, for ever. Ah! dearest Bertha, whatever power thy attractions afterwards continued to hold over me, it never exceeded, and scarcely equalled, the emotion caused by that single look. I was all tumult, and fear, and confusion, while she was gracious and self-possessed, and yet so modest in her expression, that when I approached to pay my compliments, I perfectly hated myself for the awkwardness of which I was conscious in offering them.

What is it that makes this difference in the sexes, which almost invariably, at this young age, elevates the elegant girl a hundred degrees above the booby boy? It affected me the more, being so transported as I was to see her again; nor could I then, or afterwards, at all unravel how one two years younger than myself should, merely, as I thought, because she was a female, be so evidently and so greatly above me in ease of manners.

Strange to say, although more than ever ready to adore the

ground she stood upon, I was ready also to quarrel with her for it, and even deplored her superiority in good-breeding as much as her distance in rank and condition of life. I was, however, much too young a casuist, as well as too delighted at her presence, for my embarrassment to conceal my joy. A glimpse of heaven seemed to open upon me. I forgot in my rapture all the distance between us, and, what is more, that her brother and cousin were close by me, and, clasping my hands in a sort of ecstasy, I exclaimed, "My God! Is it possible that I am remembered?"

Pretty bold this for the humble youth, so conscious of his inferiority of lot, and scarcely free from the charge of easy familiarity even in a equal, who had been so little in her company. But thus it is that love for a while levels all conditions, and "takes no count of time."

Neither Bertha nor her brother knew that my broodings over her image, and the recollections of her character, had been incessant, and though twelve months had passed since I had seen her, I had seemed to have been present with her the whole of that interval. My speech, therefore, thus extorted from me by my surprise, though only natural to myself, to them appeared extraordinary, perhaps impertinent. It certainly was critical, for, from whatever motive, Miss Hastings changed from that heavenly openness of countenance, in which she was as inimitable as unimitated by all women, to a retreating reserve, which put smiles to flight, and seemed to crush my very heart.

I observed, too, that Foljambe looked most seriously displeased, and both he and his cousin measured me with their eyes, as if in anger, if not in contempt.

A revulsion instantly took place. I felt riven from head to foot: my pulse stopped, and I was giddy from sensations which for the life of me I could not understand. I had ten thousand fears, but of what exact kind, was beyond me. All I knew was, that I feared I had offended Bertha, but how I did not know.

The thought made me miserable, and was not diminished when in her cousin I thought I saw an angry rival. I was in agony lest Bertha might have thought me disrespectful. I felt I had been too free, and my miserable insignificance pressed me down like the weight of *peine forte et dure*.

And yet, when I thought of old times, and beheld the altered brow of Foljambe, and still more, the pert superciliousness of the cousin, my spirits rallied; my Norman blood again warmed, and, decayed as it was, I could have quarrelled with them both, *à outrance*, in very relief to my feelings.

Little, indeed, do those know, who give themselves up to a passion like mine, *and the object is above them*, the daily and hourly mortifications or unfounded hopes they are doomed to feel from

every incident that occurs. A look, a smile of doubtful character, a frown, a mistaken construction, an awkwardness, an unguarded word—all these are often to the jealous “confirmation strong” of whatever feeling is uppermost. They may be pregnant with happiness or unhappiness, and yet are possibly all unfounded, or mistaken; at best, they may be wofully exaggerated.

No! though I have said, and repeat, that love will elevate and purify the soul, particularly in the young, and though, under all its mortifications, mine for this enchanting girl, so much my superior, gave me sometimes a bliss beyond all price, still I would never advise an ingenuous, high-spirited youth to aspire to one greatly above him. The throes of doubt, “the pangs of despised love,” and the resentment at its being so, cannot but lacerate a bosom made for better things, and all that Spenser said so feelingly of the miseries of disappointed ambition may every word of it be applied to a heart that places its love beyond its sphere—

“To lose good days that might be better spent,
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed on hope, to pine in fear and sorrow,
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares,
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs,
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.”

All this is that unhappy person’s lot, who sets his affections so high above himself as to extinguish all hope of success.

There! I have given my young readers a lesson: whether, or how, I profited by it myself, the sequel will show.

An awkwardness of a minute or two was the consequence of my joyful but too familiar exclamation at the sight of Bertha, and I was glad to be in some measure relieved from it by the entrance of Mr. Hastings. Yet I know not that I gained much by the reception given me by that stately gentleman. He offered me his white and delicate hand to touch, but certainly not to squeeze; yet he observed I was much improved. Strange to say, I did not like this. It made me too much of a boy, where I wanted to appear an accomplished man. He then said he supposed he should see my father on the grand jury, where he believed he was sometimes summoned.

I thought this contemptuous, and was angry, and my anger rather braced me. Yet all this was but jealous fancy; for at that very time, as I afterwards learned, Mr. Hastings wished to thank me for the good counsel which Foljambe could not conceal I had given him in his quarrel with the Dean, which drove him from Oxford.

Exclusive of this, though Mr. Hastings had all the reserve which belonged to a man conscious of superior degree, his real good-breeding never allowed him to show it so as to distress another. It was

myself that made things appear wrong; so that when he motioned me, as I thought too condescendingly, to take a chair, in my then temper, I was dissatisfied; but when he occupied himself with the newspapers, I was still more displeased, and resolved to take my leave.

I sat awhile in a sort of sullen silence, not at all relieved by the taciturnity of the rest of the party. This distressed me still more, for I thought it was assumed on purpose to show that I was now unwelcome; and this no sooner darted into my mind, than I rose and abruptly left the room, with a mixture of *mauvaise honte* and indignation, which made me any thing but happy. I stopped not to examine whether I had any reason for this; but, with the weakness and injustice of a jealous person, conscious of inferiority, and at the same time with no small portion of pride himself, I taxed the whole party with pride unbearable. I asked myself what I had said, or done, to be ashamed of? If Bertha, said I, thinks I have been impertinent by showing joy at seeing her—if she is grown so great a lady as to forget her companion and playfellow, or slight him because she came to York in a coach and six—why Bertha is not the girl for me, and I will think of her no more.

These heroics lasted all the way down stairs, and in the inn yard, and, no doubt, I looked, as I felt, a hero, as far as the very street. But as that street was over-looked by the balcony of the room I had left, I could not help turning my eyes upwards, with I know not what expectation, when it was my fortune to behold once more the fair being who had caused all this perturbation, so innocent of all I had accused her of, nay, I should say, so kind and like herself, that my anger and spirit were gone, and I was again that humbled creature who could have fallen down and worshipped her in the very street itself.

A quelled rebellion, they say, strengthens a sovereign. It is certain that from that moment Bertha, without an attempt even to understand her, was more my sovereign than ever. Hopeless and sad, I yet felt a secret gladness in having thus, of *my own will*, with no helps from explanation, for which there had been no possible opening, restored her to the place she had possessed with me; and this made me happy.

Such is love!

I now no longer knew where I was. The animated scene about me gave me no interest; the place, busy as it was, could supply nothing to my observation. A fit of absence took possession of me for the rest of the day; I could neither eat nor talk to any one, still less listen to my father's account of the calendar, and, least of all, superintend the rubbing down of the old horse, as he desired me. In truth, I was absorbed in the endeavour to unravel, if possible, the mysteries which seemed to have attended my reception by the only

people in the world whose good or ill reception could cause me a thought. I cannot be said to have reasoned on my position ; a man in love never reasons ; but it became essential to my peace to understand both Bertha and her family.

Fool ! coxcomb ! blockhead ! As if it signified the toss of a doit what were their sentiments concerning me. How little do we ever know what is good for us !

CHAPTER XVI.

I GO TO A BALL, AM MORE AND MORE CHARMED BY BERTHA, BUT ILL-USED
BY HER BROTHER.

Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,
A villain that is hither come in spite,
To mock at our solemnity this night.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Romeo and Juliet*.

A NEW and very different scene now opened. The sound of the harp, the tabor, and at least a dozen fiddles, had resounded, and a thousand lights had blazed through the windows of the York Assembly Rooms, for more than an hour, during which I had paced the outside of the building, a martyr to jealousy, uncertainty, doubt, and fear. If these were mingled with a little, a very little hope, it was only because, whatever our misery, that last support and best gift of heaven never thoroughly abandons us.

I had been in a thousand minds whether to enter the ball-room, after waiting to see Bertha go in. Yet she was more than ever attractive by her elegance ; for the grace and lustre of her habiliments, in which her father always took a peculiar pride, were set off with still more power by the lustre of her person. But she was accompanied by her family, with whom I was at least in doubtful humour, and closely attended by her cousin, with whom my humour was not doubtful at all. I therefore staid behind, listening to the music, and chewing indeed the cud of bitter fancy. The certainty that her cousin was dancing with her maddened me ; and the apprehension that she was smiling upon him did not restore me.

Twice I went in, and progressed half-way up the room. Twice I returned, afraid to encounter them. On my third essay, I saw Mr. Mansell leading her down the dance, and, to my great delight, he danced abominably ill. Could I fail to recollect the happy time when, at Foljambe, she was so amused by the lessons which she insisted should be given to Charles and me ; how playfully she laughed at his endeavours, and how often commended mine ?

I confess the envy with which I now saw Mansell was consoled

by the thought, that if I had been in his place, I could at least have done her more justice. Presently, indeed, his awkwardness was so great, he was so out in the figure and in the time, that in very hopelessness of his getting right, and annoyed at his being an object of criticism by the spectators, she said, though with good-nature, "perhaps we had better sit down." The discomfited youth was too glad to do so, and led her to the first sofa that offered, which happened (strange chance, I thought,) to be the one on which I was sitting.

It was scarce possible for her not to greet me, had she been disinclined to do so. But she was not disinclined, and gave me both looks and words, which haunted me all night afterwards. The reserve of the morning seemed completely gone. With her own frankness, she said she was glad I had come to the ball, which (O! how I marked and treasured the words!) she was *afraid* I would not do. What could possibly make her afraid? What did it signify to her whether I came or not? These were questions that did not fail to offer themselves all the while she was speaking, and covered me with blushes of I know not what import, except that it was one of happiness. But when she went on to remind me of our little dancing lessons at the park, and hoped I had not lost the Highland fling, I felt a tumult of pleasure, proceeding, I fear, in some measure from vanity, but also, I am sure, from feelings far more pure. Altogether they were indescribable, nor, were I to live my years over again, could I ever forget the arch and frank expression of her whole air, manner, and voice, in which those reminiscences were conveyed.

How was this? and why, if every word she uttered was no more than what any other person in the same situation might have used—why was I left by it in almost a trance of emotion? So, however, it has been from the beginning of time, and will be to the end of it. All can feel—none analyse—the wayward movements which the wayward passion that engrossed me can assume. What brought me to my senses, which for a moment I seemed to have lost, was the effect which this little raillery had upon the cousin, who looked proud, mortified, and angry, yet did not on that account escape a scolding for his awkwardness, and depriving her of her dance; "for which," said she, "at your desire I have rebelled against all propriety and Mademoiselle La Porte. Upon my word, if I were you, I would discharge my tutor, with whom you say you make such progress, and take a dancing master, a much better tutor, in his stead; at least if, as you say you do, you wish to please the ladies. There is Mr. Clifford now, who hardly ever had a lesson except the one at Foljambe, which I have been talking of, yet he never made a blunder in the figure, much less murdered the time. But there is papa; I must go and make him get me another partner, for I positively won't sit still all the evening."

So saying, she sprang up to meet Mr. Hastings, who was coming

down the room with the sheriff, and by her gestures and arch looks at us, indicated that she was shewing up her cousin to his father and uncle. Whether she mentioned me, or how, if she did, I would have just given all I was worth to know, though that was not much.

Young Mansell, never very sweet-tempered, now looked sourness itself. The very slight introduction to him which I had had in the morning would have left me with no wish to claim his acquaintance, but if it had, it was evident he had no wish to accord it, and I indulged it by leaving him in full possession of his sofa. There he shouldered every body that came near him, and exhibited every mark of spleen, so ridiculously, that though the son of the sheriff, and I of a decayed gentleman, I thought I would not have exchanged situations with him.

In truth, this and the enchantment thrown about me by the condescending recollection of Bertha filled me with a pride of self-respect and independence, for which I was all the better. It was now, however, put to a severe trial, for in five minutes I perceived Foljambe with his discarded cousin arm in arm, and apparently in deep conference, and after often turning his eyes to me, he separated from Mansell to accost me, which at first gave me pleasure. Soon, however, I found the Christ Church leaven had returned, in an altered manner, and so altered a tone, that I felt hurt and confounded.

Having not over civilly said "I did not know you came to these places, especially as you do not seem to have any acquaintances here," he went on to tell me that he supposed, from what he heard had been passing, I meant to ask his sister to dance; "and I only think it right to tell you," added he, observing my unfeigned surprise, "that you will not succeed if you do, and had therefore better not propose it. To be fair with you, my father will not be pleased, and as she has declared she cannot dance any more with her cousin, I have just engaged her to my friend Sir Harry Melford, for whom she is waiting at the top of the room."

Sir Harry Melford was a fashionable young man of five-and-twenty. He had been one of the ornaments both of Eton and Christ Church, in scholarship far above mediocrity, and in all his exercises much renowned. With much cultivation of mind, he had strong passions, which he concealed by great decorum of manner, so that they never seemed to plunge him into excesses. The chief of them was a warm devotion to the ladies, which, with an uncommon fine person, and most insinuating address, enabled him so far to indulge it with success, that he was thought by most ladies irresistible.

His figure, title, and estate, added to this disposition of his, made him a very redoubtable personage with the sex; nor was his popularity diminished with either man or woman for being perfectly well-bred. No one, therefore, could say (not Mr. Hastings himself) that he was not a proper partner for Mr. Hastings' daughter; nor

did Mr. Hastings' son think him by any means an improper companion for himself.

But this, I thought, gave no right to Charles to address me as he did, especially as his seeming fear of my presumptuous intentions, instilled into him, no doubt, by Mansell, was the reverse of founded. Of this I informed him in a tone as distant as his own—indeed, with a sort of haughty indifference, under the guise of an assumed humility, surprising to myself as well as to him.

“I beg to tell you, Foljambe,” said I, “in the first place, that you have been most grossly misinformed, for I never had the intention, much less the actual presumption, to present myself as a partner to your sister. Nor need you have been so careful to remind me that I am still the very humble person she, as well as yourself, once condescended to notice. Your fear, therefore, that I should even attempt to stand in the way of your friend, Sir Harry, is at least groundless, and your caution, for which, however, I thank you, might have been spared.”

The effect of this speech, I own, gave me pleasure. I saw that he was disconcerted. He reddened, bit his lips, and his air of superiority almost abandoned him. But as he expressed no compunction, and seemed ashamed of *appearing* ashamed, I was at no pains to ask or give further explanations. A sudden elevation of feeling came over me, and, for a moment, I thought myself his equal. I had loved him well enough to give an under look, to see if there were a stretched out hand of offered reconciliation ; but none appearing, I turned upon my heel and left him, with a disgust far from concealed.

At first I thought of quitting the room, but this my newly called up spirit forbade, and, with a boldness which astonished my own mind, I walked to the top of it, just as Sir Harry and Bertha had led off the dance. Will it be believed, that I saw it without any other emotion than that of insulted pride. And yet of pride, Bertha, the dear, the natural Bertha, had never herself been guilty. She had been grave and reserved in the morning, but afterwards had delightfully renewed the frankness and vivacity which belonged to her—proving that if for a moment she had changed, it was, perhaps, to check the liberty of my own eagerness, or perhaps, as I now began to think, influenced by her brother and cousin. No ; with this loved being I had and could have no quarrel, for to see her was to put you in good humour with yourself and all the world.

Not so with her brother, my former friend, now I feared, my estranged acquaintance. The words, “You will not succeed ; to be fair with you, my father will be displeased,” and “I have engaged her to my friend Sir Harry—” these words tingled in my ears, and gave many a quick beat to my pulse ; and though my heart swelled as I beheld his sister with inimitable grace coming down

the dance with a partner, it must be owned, very different from her awkward cousin, yet the renewed slight I felt her brother had put upon me, in his own and his father's name, made me survey Bertha herself with something like defiance.

Well, thought I, as she flitted by with the happy Sir Harry, let him plume himself upon his fashionable, and forget his Sedbergh friend—what is he, or even this sister of whom he is so chary, to—

I would have said *me* (with whatever sincerity), when, as strange fortune would have it, an accident put a stop to all reflection, in calling upon me to exert myself to save the principal subject of it from (in a ball-room at least) an unpleasant situation;—for the end of one of the ropes, which separated the dancers into two sets, having been heedlessly left on the floor, caught her light foot, and losing her balance, she would have fallen on her face, had not I, who with all my pride was anxiously watching her, caught the hand she stretched out for help, and, though not without effort, prevented an absolute fall.

What were not my sensations when I felt this hand necessarily pressing mine to restore her balance! What, when I heard her, in the softest voice in the world, utter sweet words of thanks, and when Sir Harry, who had come up, observed how lucky it was that *that gentleman* was so near, she replied to him, but with a look at *me*, which searched me—“lucky indeed! and how kindly and nicely he saved me.”

The look and the words together put all my pride to flight, nor could I help wondering that she should with such emphasis call that help kind to her, which any one, the most indifferent, would in the same situation have received.

How did I not afterwards brood upon this! But though totally softened in regard to *her*, I was as punctilious as ever in my resolutions as to her family. These, hearing she had had an actual fall (report never loses in its progress), had now approached, and were eagerly asking if she was hurt.

“If I am not,” replied she, “it is entirely owing to Mr. De Clifford, who was fortunately so near, and so cleverly saved me.”

Mr. Hastings gave me a bow, which, in truth, was one of hearty kindness, for much he loved his child, and Foljambe a look which I thought cold; and I was by no means flattered when young Mansell said, he wondered Sir Harry had not been more alert than to leave her for assistance to a *stranger*.

The indignation which this word created sank deep into my mind. It was ungracious, unkind, and even ungrateful, small as the service had been; at any rate it was insulting, and I vowed vengeance. My vengeance, however, was only to resolve to leave the room and go home.

The room I left; but before I went home, unable to think of sleep,

I wandered by the side of the Ouse, which lay in my way to my inn, and I did this in a frame of mind far from enviable. And yet I had received some little comfort even in the moment of quitting the assembly; for I passed Bertha as I retired, who exclaimed, in a tone which I thought (perhaps it was only thought) said more than the words expressed, "What, going! and so soon?"

The nightingales which I have since heard in the moonlight south, in the same sort of wandering, never were to me half so musical as those few and simple words.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RESTLESSNESS OF A LOVER.

Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorns.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Romeo and Juliet*.

How sweet is the description of youth, which calls it "the April of our years!" What delightful promises is not this month supposed by the poets to hold out?

"A day in *April* never comes so sweet,
To tell us lovely summer is at hand."

"Youth, the *April* of man's life,"

"Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely *April* of his prime."

So says Shakspeare.

"Brisk as the *April* buds in primrose season."

So says Milton; and so, or to the same tune, a variety of others.

Now, for the life of me, I never could discover, from my own experience at least, a reason for the similarity between April and youth, except that in both there are a great many fools and a great many tears; that in both is to be found a perpetual succession of hopes disappointed, expectations thwarted, the cup of Tantalus, or the friar's lanthorn of Puck.

Thus it was with me; for in this supposed genial period, my life had received its first shock, by the total darkness that followed so suddenly the little gleam of hope which shone for a moment over my renewed intercourse with Hastings.

I slept not the whole night of the ball, or if I dozed for a moment, the nymph-like step of Bertha responding to that of Sir Harry, or the cold, changed eye of Charles, like Macbeth, "murdered sleep." I had read in Thomson of

"The charming agonies of love,
Whose misery delights."

Never was anything, I thought, so false. I had agonies, but they were not charming; misery, but it did not delight. Thomson, however, I found correct in other passages on the same subject. For the next day, to divert my thoughts, if possible, I had explored the libraries of York, and had accompanied my father to a public dinner, where persons of my own degree strove to make me converse. But, alas! I found

“Books were but formal dulness, tedious friends;
And sad amid the social band I sat,
Lonely and inattentive.”

In point of fact, though these companions of my father were exceedingly honest persons, to look at, hear, or join with them, made me unhappy, because neither their rank, nor manners, nor accomplishments, could bear a comparison with those who moved in the higher and more elegant circle which had charmed me, notwithstanding my resentment. Anything now that breathed not of that brilliant atmosphere which seemed to surround Bertha, so far from having charms, was even disgusting.

This was my first taste of the misfortune which attends a decayed gentleman, who, no matter from what cause, wilfully lifts himself above the sphere to which his family has fallen; and I began more than ever to feel the sagacity of Fothergill's advice, and to deplore that I had not obeyed it.

And yet the little progress I had made in the society I so admired, or rather the many steps I had retrograded from it, was too cruelly proved to my feelings at this moment not to make me regret this turn in my lot. It was not that my father's associates had anything uncouth or repulsive about them; that their station was other than respectable; or even that they had not the general advantages of common education. They were not indeed able to make or quote verses like Foljambe; they were all men of business, and cared not for song, nor possibly for love. But this it was that made my too sickly pride, added to the devotion of my young love, look upon them with aversion. Yet they had shrewd, sensible heads, reasonably honest hearts, and understood the world, practically at least, if they did not philosophize upon human nature.

Had I not therefore lain under a spell, which warped my mind, and left it anything but free, I might have found pleasure as well as profit in communicating with them. But this, not only the state of my heart, “sighing like furnace,” but the taste I had imbibed for elegance, and what may be called *tournure*, forbade. *Tournure*, indeed, was not a term then in my vocabulary for I had not then known the charming woman who taught it me—herself the most elegant pattern of its most finished character. Nor did I use the word in examining why I felt the distaste I had for everything that

did not belong to it. But the idea made itself understood, though I could not describe it in language, and my feelings told me plainly enough that it was all traceable to Bertha. Everything that did not seem in connection with her and hers (even though with *hers* I had so bitterly quarrelled) was vapid, dull, tasteless, and uninteresting.

Hence, though I had sense enough to feel that in my station of life I had no right to look to the refinement of higher classes, yet the fascination of manners which I met not at home, and the consciousness of our descent from ancient nobles, would never let me think that I was that miserable character under which I have designated myself—of a decayed gentleman. Decayed I might be, but not the less, I thought, a gentleman; and this only heightened the delicacy of feeling always created by love.

For this I took myself to task, but that did not help me; and I fear I passed with my father's friends, perhaps with my father himself, for a sullen youth, stranger to good manners, possibly to good-nature. It is certain, that, whether from this over-delicacy, or the resentful recollection of the evening before, the day after the ball was the least happy of my life.

Another, however, now opened before me, though, as it happened, it was devoted to the same engrossing subject. For, notwithstanding I had resolved to wean myself from those who had so mortified, nay, as I thought, so insulted me, and therefore meant to pass the morning in the courts, I found that on leaving our inn, instead of turning to the right towards the Castle, I turned to the left towards the sheriffs' lodging. For what purpose this was, I had not time to ask my own breast, for I was there before I knew where I was. I found, also, I had been particularly attentive to my dress,—with what view, let those who can understand me explain. I did not exactly at the time explain it to myself, but felt a sort of anxious curiosity as to the persons I might meet with in my walk; and that walk brought me exactly opposite to those windows which I knew contained a pearl of price, though never to be worn by me.

For one who had vowed such spirit and dignity, I was afraid I did not come off well. Bertha was in the balcony arrayed for a walk with her brother and her cousin. She looked more lovely than ever, but not for me; for, occupied with her friends, neither she, nor they, I verily believe, saw me; and I record this in proof of the folly that possessed me: for, will it be believed that I pouted, nay, was fiercely angry, because they had not chosen to recognise a person whom I would not believe they had not seen? If it is thus I am to be treated, said I—if all my devotion is to be so neglected, adieu to Bertha—adieu to Foljambe for ever.

As to Mansell, he was not worth an adieu; and I was stalking off with great dignity, when I met Sir Harry, bending towards the inn, evidently to join the select party above. He looked so happy,

that I hated him; nor was the feeling diminished by the certainty I felt that he intended not to notice me. Yet mark, how wrong we may be! Sir Harry had naturally good breeding *spite* of his title and 8,000*l.* a year, which, like the fool I was, and in the very spirit of a decayed gentleman, I chose to think would prevent the possession of that pleasing attribute. I therefore felt surprised that—recollecting me for the person who had saved Bertha from a fall the evening before—he actually, and not ungracefully, gave me a bow of recognition. My decayed gentility thus relieved, Sir Harry rose instantly in my esteem—nay, immediately became in my eyes himself “a marvellous proper gentleman.”

What children—or rather what fools—are we, high as we think ourselves in the scale of being!

To return to my tale: I walked quickly on, resolving to think no more of the sheriff's party. What could it be to me what they were doing, or what going to do? Yet as Bertha, in the balcony, was equipped for a walk, her beautiful green pelisse would not get out of my mind; so I thought I would just stop at the end of the street, *from mere curiosity*, to observe where they were going. Of course to the Castle, as I thought, and I therefore resolved not to go there myself, for why should I throw myself in their way? They, however, took the road to Bishopthorpe, and most consistently I changed my resolve, and, taking a shorter cut, determined to meet them on the road. I will shew them, said I, that I am master of myself, and they nothing to me. As to Mansell, he is a clown, who cannot dance; Foljambe has long turned coxcomb, and belied all his pretensions to sincerity; and for Sir Harry—now for the life of me I could find no fault with Sir Harry, and was almost sorry that he had not treated me ill, instead of condescending to know me.

With these feelings I met the party full in their front, within a few yards of the palace¹, whither they were bound.

How many associations are wound about that palace, which afterwards became a source of some of my happiest recollections—happy no longer. Yet can I not refuse to record (when thus presented to my memory) the pleasure I had in being noticed by the venerable and venerated being who, in those days, presided over that spot in patriarchal dignity and patriarchal love. He has long slept with his fathers, and left this earthly abode for a better, together with all belonging to him whom it is any pleasure to remember: and it may be politic to touch but slightly upon days and feelings which are gone, never to return.

The party all seemed struck with surprise at meeting me; the men, as I thought, annoyed, and rather puzzled how I was to be greeted. But with Bertha, dear Bertha! there was no hesitation

¹ The Archbishop's.

Her eye, indeed, could never forget to sparkle, whatever her mood ; but though I might be deceived by its brilliancy, I could not mistake a sort of blush, and the real smile with which she returned my respectful salute. This, however, her escort spoiled by hurrying her on. Sir Harry, indeed, was neutral, but Mansell and her brother were evidently molested by the rencontre, and wished to elude it.

For Mansell I did not care, but not so with Foljambe, whose marked and studious coldness could not be mistaken, and filled me with resentment as well as grief. He stalked away, almost forcing his sister with him into the grounds of the palace, whose gates opened wide to receive them, but closed swiftly and suddenly on *me*, as if unworthy their company.

This maddened me, and I returned to the city, bitterly brooding over the truths impressed upon me so forcibly by my prophetic tutor, on the miseries of unequal friendships. “The deep waters of the proud,” said I, as I walked on, “have gone over my soul ; my soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and with the deceitfulness of the proud.”

In this temper, for the twentieth time, I resolved (never again to be bent from it) to give up the whole affair, and banish Bertha, and certainly her brother, from my memory for ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I MAKE VERSES BY THE SIDE OF A BROOK.—HOW THEIR CONSEQUENCES AFFECT MY SITUATION WITH BERTHA, AND PRODUCE INCREASED INTIMACY WITH MR. GRANVILLE.

Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peered forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad,
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore,
So early walking did I see your son.
Tow'rds him I made, but he was 'ware of me,
And stole into the covert of the wood.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Romeo and Juliet*.

How well I pursued the resolutions I formed, shall now be disclosed. The contending feelings I had undergone left me neither inclination nor power to enter into either the business or amusements of the place. My father's occupation at the castle gave me the full disposal of myself, and, like the wise person I was, I disposed of myself in just the most imprudent manner I could, for I sought my recovery in solitude.

About a mile from York there is a romantic dell, through which a transparent brook runs gurgling and bubbling, delighting the ear with its music and the eye with its sparkle—both so soothing, be-

cause so gentle. I had discovered it by chance in roaming through the suburbs, it being in fact much hid by its mounds, though tributary to the Ouse. It wound, now softly and slow, now rattling and rapid, between two willowy sides, along one of which was a pleasant path, which, from its being circuitous from the city, was little frequented. To me, this only added to its charms, for here I could muse on whatever subject “till fancy had her fill;” and here I *did* muse on that subject which was always uppermost in my heart.

But even without this, there is something in a brook which always lays hold of the mind, quietly indeed, and almost imperceptibly, but with an increasing and lasting attraction which scenes more tumultuous do not possess. Whatever your humour, a brook administers to it. It adapts itself to every sense, it soothes, it exhilarates; it moans, it laughs; it sighs, it sings; it is silent, it babbles; it lingers, it rushes; it is darksome, it is brilliant; it stands still, it leaps forward; it is all melancholy, all gay. Then again, it has a freshness which nothing else can confer, no art imitate, or luxury reach: it gives coolness to the feeling, and sweetness to the taste. But its moral effects are still more pleasing. It dispels gloom and languor; promotes benevolence and gratitude; sympathizes with the low in spirit, and will not suffer the proud to set up their horn. It has vivacity for the young, tranquillity for the old; it promotes a love for elegant nature, and a taste for elegant poetry: above all, it is so hallowed and peaceful, that it will suffer no guilty or tumultuous thought to pollute its vicinage, but diffuses holiness, innocence, and cheerful virtue over everything around. He who possesses such a brook may almost laugh at the world.

What a fortune was this retreat to any contemplative man—particularly a contemplative lover. But its effect upon me, after a very short acquaintance with it, was anything but what I intended—that is, in the leisure it afforded to fortify me in my resolution to forget Bertha. For two days the early morning always found me there, and I could scarce leave it in the late evening; for every murmur of the water—every flower on its margin—and, above all, the sweet freshness of its banks, spoke, looked, and breathed of nothing but Bertha.

Had I been wise I should never have visited this spot twice. But I was a fool—that is to say, romantic—if romance, which so beguiles us into happiness, is folly. For a few yards the path was beautifully ornamented with an avenue of sycamores, which, from the busy scenes in the city, was now wholly deserted. It suited better on that account with my humour, and was perhaps the principal attraction of the place. At the foot of one of these sycamores (*umbratilis arbos*) I laid me down,

“Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,”

of which take the fruits, gentle reader, if only because they so incontestably prove the advance I had made in my cure.

THE LOVER'S HOPE.

Ah! why repress the bursting sigh,
Or why the starting tear restrain?
The bliss of sensibility
Doth richly over-pay the pain.

Then feed on thoughts, my soul, that move
The purest, tenderest desire;
Live on your hope, nor cease to love,
Nor fear to fan the generous fire.

Those speaking eyes, sweet girl, 'tis true,
On me with love were never turn'd;
But hate, if hate can dwell in you,
In you I never yet discern'd.

That dimpled cheek, which lightly glows,
Ne'er glow'd with love for me, I own;
But on those downy arched brows
I never yet observed a frown.

Perhaps those eyes may one day turn
On me, and with soft favour shine;
Perhaps that cheek may one day burn
With the same fire that flushes mine.

Then feed on thoughts, my soul, that move
The purest, tenderest desire;
Live on your hope, nor cease to love,
Nor fear to fan the generous fire.

Having finished this effusion, I returned with it to my lodgings, far more satisfied, I fear, than if it had been the most profound stoical treatise *de contemptu amoris*. Here I spread it on my table, in order to give it a last polish, and here I left it, on being called away to speak to my father in the Castle-yard, saying I would return in ten minutes. What was my surprise, on my return, to find my room, and my verses too, in possession of Mr. Granville, whose genius for musical composition, and feeling for love-poetry and Petrarch, I have already mentioned.

From his known reputation and connection with York, Mr. Granville had been invited from Oxford to join the amateur concerts to be given during the assize week; and, as his musical compositions had always been admired, had been earnestly requested to favour the undertaking by bringing some of them with him. I have said he was kindly disposed towards me, and, hearing I was at York, had come to visit me, when, finding I was expected every minute, he had waited my return.

He was a little confused at being found with my manuscript in his hand, which he confessed he had read, upon seeing it open for

anybody's perusal; adding, however, by way of additional claim for pardon, that even if he thought he had been doing wrong, he was afraid he could not have desisted, the sentiments being, as he was pleased to say, so much in the very spirit of true and generous love.

"If these verses are yours," said he, "I can only say, I congratulate and envy you too."

This from a man, himself so distinguished for his own poetry and musical powers, must have insured his pardon, had the fault not been my own for so carelessly leaving myself open to be read by any straggler in the hotel.

"But do you know," said he, "that your pardon will not content me? The verses are so affecting, that they would admirably set off affecting music, and I have recently indulged myself in an amatory composition, to suit which I have in vain looked for words: Will you give these to me—that is, allow me to adapt them to the air I have composed? If your mistress is like Cowley's, ideal, and merely a theme to exercise your taste for poetry (for I apprehend you are too young for this to be more than imaginary), no harm can be done, and you will essentially oblige me."

He then proceeded again to commend the stanzas.

What shall I say? The thought of appearing in public as an author astonished, nay frightened me: but he answered this by saying the author would not be known.

Then, if Bertha should ever discover that she was the subject! But that could hardly be, if even the author were known; and if even she applied them (which was scarcely possible), there might perhaps be a melancholy pleasure in thinking that my hopeless passion was not buried in obscurity; and as *I meant never to see her again*, why the thing would be indifferent. Was I quite sure that it would be so? that I should not be even pleased that she should know how much and with what constancy I had loved her, though all in secrecy, silence, and despair? Were I dying, I thought it might do me good to think she should not be ignorant of this.

Well! after a variety of arguments urged and answered on both sides, Mr. Granville and flattery prevailed; and leaving him to his own impression, that the passion described was imaginary, I allowed him to copy the verses, with which he walked off.

That very day the manuscript composition was announced for the next morning's concert, at which, of course, the whole Hastings party would attend! How can I describe the interest of that moment!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

I am advised to give her music o'mornings ;
They say it will penetrate.

CYMBELINE.

I WAS early in the concert-room, and soon saw the entry of those who alone gave it a charm in my eyes.

From I know not what cause, Charles was not among them, which did not displease me; but Mr. Hastings escorted his daughter and sister, the sheriff's lady, with a daughter, Miss Lucinda Mansell, a pleasing girl, and her odious brother.

Bertha was arrayed in all her loveliness of person and elegance of attire, combining the dignity of a queen with the grace of a nymph; in short, with all that distinction, yet suavity of manner, which attracted the regard and attention of every one, from the highest to the lowest. Accordingly, she was surrounded in a moment by the *élite* of the gentry at York; while I, at a distance, was more than ever shrunk in my own littleness, and more than ever impressed with my own temerity.

However, the commencement of the concert dissipated these reflections, and left me eager for the performance of the important strain; an eagerness which, from the reputation of Mr. Granville, who was known to have composed the music, and was otherwise so well known at York, seemed to be shared by the audience.

It met with complete success. The melody was so beautiful, that it would have insured favour to any words; but the words themselves had also a share of praise. This I found from the remarks of many to whom I sat near, particularly of some young females of prepossessing appearance; though it was chiefly valuable to me for the hope this caused that Bertha might be of the same opinion. From what they said they plainly thought that Mr. Granville was the author of the stanzas as well as the music. "What a delightful man that Mr. Granville must be!" said these young ladies.

Can I deny my pleasure? But, safely can I say, that it was only or chiefly because it shewed it possible that another might think so too, and the verses be approved by her as well as by these strangers. This I thought not unlikely; for the enviable Granville, enrolled in the Hastings' party, was seated next to his lovely relation, who, to the annoyance of her other cousin, Mansell, who sat on the other side, gave him all her attention. Nay, it was obvious, for I could see it from my station, that she was complimenting him upon the

melody, and *perhaps* upon the words, thinking them his ; for he replied to her animated address with a succession of bows, but also with shakes of the head ; the one evidently from acquiescence, the other as evidently from disclaimer.

All this was confirmed to me afterwards by himself, and, on leaving the room, I had the delight not only of receiving an angelic look of kindness from Bertha as she passed, but a direct appeal to my opinion, whether the thought in the new stanzas were not charming? Moreover, this was crowned by an observation, that I had not called again upon her father.

I went home, plunged in a sea of delight, and could not sleep that night for joy.

The next day, Mr. Granville called again, and gladdened me by reporting what many, but particularly Bertha, thought of the stanzas. They were pathetic, generous, she said, delicate, and full of devotion, which could scarcely fail, she thought, to win the object of them.

What an agitating recital for me ! Granville knew not the flame he was fanning, or the firmness he was undermining in relating this. "Let me tell you, however," said he, "that my honesty underwent no slight trial with my delightful kinswoman, who would have it, spite of my asseverations to the contrary, that I was the author ; and concluded, playfully (you know how frank she is), that she was glad that the verses were not made upon her, for she should be in danger."

My cheek became instantly all fire at this account, which luckily Mr. Granville, having moved to the window to look at a passing carriage, did not perceive ; but I was in still greater danger when he added, "By the way, Miss Hastings thought you very ungallant yesterday, considering how intimate you had formerly been at Foljambe Park, and wondered at your keeping so aloof in the same room, but supposed you had grown fine at Oxford. She owned, however, you were the cleverest man in the world at saving a lady from a fall in a ball-room."

Granville having thus unconsciously set fire to a train, the mischief or extent of which he could not foresee, left me in a sort of trance, from which for very many minutes I did not recover.

When I awoke, it is astonishing what a confusion I felt in my brain. Surprise, pleasure, uncertainty, hope, timidity, doubt, fluctuation, resolution—in short, like the booby Silvius¹ (who seems no booby either as to his own case), I was "all made of passion, wishes, adoration, duty, observance, humbleness, patience, and impatience."

My thoughts of flight were alternately renewed and suspended.

¹ As You Like It.

The lover, as well as the drowning man, catches at a straw. From Granville's account it was plain I had a portion of—I was going to say her favour—but no! even the *Lover's Hope* could not fabricate that—so I contented myself with calling it good-will; and did not her cheerful, kind nature bestow good-will on every one, even Mansell?

But then, what could I expect by remaining? To be looked down upon! to be told to keep my distance! not by her, but by her brother, perhaps her father! Forbid it pride! Forbid it prudence! Forbid it the noble name of Clifford, however decayed!

Yet to fly, to lose all mastery over myself! to live a coward in my own esteem! a slave! an exile! forbid it the same pride and noble name! forbid it everything that was manly, firm, or independent!

Unable to decide, or even to think; unnerved by Granville's information, though only of a very common-place matter, meaning at best little, perhaps nothing,—I again sought my dear brook, sure, at least, of there finding solitude and leisure for my deliberations.

But I was disappointed; it was solitude no longer. And how was it broken in upon? The romantic Granville had found it out as well as myself, though he had not, like myself, wooed it for the sake of retirement. In fact, upon his discovering its pleasantness, he had tempted the very persons I was striving to avoid to recreate themselves in its shade and seclusion, while their more busy relatives, the sheriff and Mr. Hastings, were moiling in the service of their country, in a hot court of justice. Accordingly, he had persuaded Bertha, chaperoned by her aunt, Mrs. Mansell, and accompanied by both her cousins, to pass half an hour in that cool retreat.

What a rencontre was here! No escaping if I would! Unwilling if I could.

Bertha, in a simple flowered gown, and that most becoming of all the parts of female attire, a walking bonnet, was more attracting than ever, because more like one of my own degree. This perhaps I could have withstood; but her pleased look, and the manner in which she ejaculated, as if they had escaped unintentionally, the words, "O! Mr. De Clifford, this is quite unexpected, and very apropos"—put all thought but of unmixed devotion to flight.

She soon explained what her exclamation meant, by saying, "Do you know there has been a great dispute between my aunt and cousin, Mrs. and Miss Mansell, and Mr. Granville, on the effect which his stanzas (for we all say they are his), which so pleased us yesterday, might, or ought to have on the lady addressed; and, to be sure, there never was such an appropriate place for such a discussion as this. It is a poem itself; and if I were to stay here. I think I could make verses too."

My suspicions were all up in arms at this speech, for the place,

as I have said, had generated the verses in question but two days before.

“But first,” continued Bertha, “let me introduce you to my aunt, Mrs. Mansell, and my cousin, Lucinda, and then they will go on with their argument with Mr. Granville.”

So saying, and the introduction having passed, Granville, who quite laughed at the interest which the ladies seemed to take in it, returned to the subject. “Mrs. Mansell and her daughter, my cousin there,” said he, “have the cruelty and injustice to say that the man who could secretly nurse his love, without encouragement or hope, must be a very simple or poor-spirited wretch, not worth thinking about. I, on the contrary, applaud and like him for his modesty, and think that to have loved in secret, and persevered at humble distance, with no other ground for his hope than his wishes, denotes both a stronger and a purer devotion. Anybody can love whose love is returned; but his must be attachment indeed, who, like Petrarch, can cherish it without even declaring it, much less knowing whether, if declared, it would ever be accepted. What say you?”

“May I ask,” said I, with some hesitation, “which side Miss Hastings has taken?”

“Perhaps she will tell *you*,” cried Granville, rather mischievously; “but neither I nor these ladies can get her to declare her opinion, which she pretends to be on account of her inexperience, and the difficulty and delicacy of the question; and yet in a month more she will be seventeen, and is to come out.”

“If I were to be twenty,” observed Bertha, “I ought rather to be a listener than an arguer upon such a subject.”

“Your modesty ought not to let you off,” said Granville, “particularly as it is a question for the ladies alone to decide. The men can know nothing of it. Indeed, for that we have our cousin Mansell’s authority there (pointing to him), who says he knows nothing about the matter.”

“And I don’t wish to know,” said Mansell, gruffly; “nay, I think the whole thing stuff and nonsense.”

“There I believe you,” observed Bertha; “but I do also wish that I knew the author of the stanzas, and that we had him here; he would at least tell us what he meant himself, and whether, as Lucinda says, the supposition of mere gratuitous hope is impossible because unnatural. But I still think that Mr. Granville, who we all know is so romantic, is the author himself, though he tells us he got the lines from a friend. Who is that friend? Do we know him?”

Granville laughed, and answered, “What if I were to say you do?”

Luckily he did not look at me, but without that I felt all over in consternation. I was hot and cold, and ready to run off, but was saved by the persuasion of Bertha, and indeed of all present, that

Granville was the author, notwithstanding his disavowal ; so that they did not observe my emotion.

“ Ah ! ” said Miss Hastings, “ it is mere affectation in you, cousin Granville, and not like a friend and relation, to deny it so uncandidly ; and I dare say your friend, Mr. De Clifford, thinks so too.”

“ Ask him,” said Granville roguishly, “ what he thinks was the author’s own opinion upon the question—for he knows him too—indeed, they are sworn friends, and it was through him that I procured the stanzas.”

He uttered this, as I said, roguishly, and, not knowing where he would stop, I again began to be alarmed.

Bertha seemed surprised, and looked doubtingly at me, when Mrs. Mansell said, “ Perhaps, as Mr. De Clifford is a friend of the author, he may think as he does ; and if he will not inform us who he is, he may, at least, tell us what was his real opinion.”

Granville smiled again. I was more and more embarrassed, but thought I could best recover myself by adopting the character assigned me.

“ Certainly,” said I, “ I know the author, and think with him on most points, but particularly on this.”

“ And your common opinion,” said Mrs. Mansell, “ is———”

“ That hope is so buoyant, that nothing can make it sink, particularly the ‘ Lover’s Hope,’ on which these stanzas turn ; for if real love amounts, as it is said it does, to adoration, I can fancy love even without hope, so delicious in itself, that I could feed upon it and be happy, though banished for ever from the admired object.”

Here I observed with interest that Bertha seemed most attentive.

“ What ! ” cried Mrs. Mansell, “ though your mistress frowned upon you ? ”

“ That I do not say,” replied I, “ nor, as you will observe, does the author himself ; for he asserts, in terms, that though the cheek of his sovereign lady never glowed with love for him, yet,

‘ Upon her downy arched brows
He never yet observed a frown.’ ”

“ True,” said Miss Mansell ; “ but that is not hope.”

“ Well then, even without hope,” returned I, “ I have a fancy that a man could be happy in feeding upon his love—that is, upon the attractions of his mistress’s beauty, manners, and character, though he knew he had no chance of obtaining her.”

“ Indeed ! ” cried all the ladies.

“ Yes ; for I can fancy, nay, feel sure, that a man who doats to almost madness, but, like a subject in love with his queen, must feel himself hopeless, may still delight to nurse his passion, and would not exchange it for success elsewhere.”

"This, indeed, is romantic, and at least, I should think, not very common," said Bertha.

"You think then with us, my dear," observed her aunt.

"'Tis a thing I do not venture to think of at all," replied Bertha, whose young mind seemed afraid of advancing too far. "I must live long before I can be called upon to judge even of the possibility of the thing; but if possible——"

"What then?" asked her aunt.

"Why I should think such constancy, under such discouragement, would not, as it ought not, be thrown away."

"Ought not?" asked Miss Mansell. "Could you, much more *ought* you, to love for mere constancy's sake, where you otherwise could not be inclined to do so?"

"I know not," answered her cousin; "but this I know, that kindness will always produce kindness in return; and if we love a dog or a bird because it is attached to us, much more ought we a human creature like ourselves."

"But how, where there is no kindness evident," said Mrs. Mansell, "Mr. De Clifford's supposition can be realized, and love persisted in, without its being even known, is what I cannot imagine to be possible."

"And yet," observed I, "ask the thousands who have gone mad for love, what hopes occasioned their feelings? They cannot answer. Or take my former supposition of a young and lovely queen, who enchants the air you breathe with her presence, or makes it happiness enough for you to kiss the ground she treads on. Is it hope that causes you to do this? No; rather, I should say, with a most genuine, and yet most despairing lover,

'Thus, Indian like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun that looks upon his worshipper,
But knows of him no more.'

"What charming language!" cried Bertha, and she became very pensive, as if pondering the passage.

"Upon my word," observed Mrs. Mansell, taking up the discourse, "we may talk of our cousin Granville's romance, but Mr. De Clifford beats him all to nothing. I only hope, for his own sake, this is what he has called it, his fancy, not his experience."

"What does cousin Mansell think of it?" said Granville again, and dryly turning to him.

"As I hope to be saved," replied the young gentleman, switching his boots, "I know nothing at all about the matter, except that you are all a set of confounded bores, and a confounded deal too romantic for me, so I shall hop off. Mother, I shall meet you at dinner."

So saying, this illustrious heir apparent literally effected what he announced, and hopped off from the walk.

There was a pause of some minutes, and I began to wonder at my own courage in venturing what I had said, when Bertha, after ruminating some time, said, "Pray, Mr. De Clifford, where is that beautiful passage—the most beautiful and expressive, I think I ever heard—which you quoted just now? He must, indeed, have been a lover who uttered it."

"The he was a she," observed Granville.

"But where to be found?"

"In Shakspeare," returned I. "It was the lament of poor Helena, who had fixed her affections on one too much above her even to imagine, much less expect, success. Yet she fed upon her love in secret, and, though hopeless, would not part with it."

"And who was this superior lord, who was so unwittingly adored by her?"

"The Count of Roussillon," said I. "The secret was discovered by his mother, the benefactress of Helena, who loved her like her own child. The disclosure is almost still more beautiful than the passage you admire."

"I never read the play," said Bertha.

"Perhaps it is as well you should not," observed Granville; "but what Clifford says is true; the account of her love is pathetic, and its disclosure moving."

"Cannot you two gentlemen between you," asked Lucinda, "repeat it; especially as you tell us we may as well not read the play ourselves?"

"The task is beyond my memory," replied Granville.

"And would be beyond mine," said I, seeing all the ladies turned to me, "but that I was always so struck with the scene, and entered so thoroughly into the feelings of Helena, that I never forgot it: for I thought those feelings might be man's as well as a woman's, and I, possibly, some time or other, that man; and then I might feel all the bitterness of her pathetic exclamation,

'I am from humble, he from honour'd name;
No note upon *my* parents, *his* all noble.'

I thought Bertha seemed struck with this, for she lost her smile, and looked pensively on the ground; but Miss Mansell said with liveliness, "Then you *can* repeat Helena's confession, and will, I hope, favour us."

"If you command me, certainly," returned I. "The speech is to the Count of Roussillon's mother.

'Then, I confess,
Here on my knee, before high heav'n and you,
That before you, and next unto high heav'n,

I love your son.
 My friends were poor, but honest :
 Be not offended ; *for it hurts not him*
That he is loved of me : I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit,
 Nor would I have him till I do deserve him,
 Yet never know how that desert should be.
I know I love in vain, strive against hope.
 ‘ Thus, Indian like,
 Religious in mine error, I adore
 The sun that looks upon his worshipper,
 And knows of him no more.’ ”

During this recital I observed Bertha's eyes were fixed upon the ground, and she scarcely breathed, as if she feared losing a word ; and, whether the feeling, now deeper than ever, that this was my own case, gave any peculiarity to my manner (I certainly never felt so much affected by the lines) ; or whether their own impressed the listeners as it did, they all seemed pathos moved.

Granville's natural sensibility showed he was much affected ; but I wished to penetrate, if I could, how the passage had wrought upon her whose impression was alone of consequence to *me*. She said little, but was peculiarly thoughtful, till her eyes glistened with feeling. Mrs. Mansell, however, from her age, less affected, and inclined perhaps to banter, observed,

“ So, then, Mr. De Clifford, you feared the poor lady's case might be your own. As I know the play, and that she in the end succeeded, I give you all my good wishes for the same termination.”

Bertha seemed struck, though she spoke not a word, but from that time was wrapt in her own reflections. Indeed the whole party, from I know not what cause, appeared after this to prefer silence to conversation, till I took my leave, when Mrs. Mansell, by way of a parting remark, said,

“ Mr. De Clifford, you must allow us to thank you for more than your Shakspeare, for I think you have pretty well told us who was the author of the stanzas we have so much admired.”

I was startled, and her daughter laughed *en espiègle*, which seemed rather her nature. Bertha, still grave, only said, when I wished her good morning, “ We have indeed had a charming walk ;” and, reminding me of our readings together at Foljambe, she observed, “ you have made *me* love Shakspeare better than ever ;” words which, though they long tingled in my ears, did not, I fear, in the end do me good.

Granville, whose good-will seemed to increase, on my leaving him with the ladies, begged I would breakfast with him the next day, the last of the assizes, when he was to return to Oxford.

CHAPTER XX.

GRANVILLE'S ADVICE TO ME TO FORGET BERTHA, WHICH I PROMISE TO FOLLOW.

Be ruled by me : forget to think of her.

O ! teach me how I should forget to think.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Romeo and Juliet*.

PROUD as I was of my brook, I found that it had not repaid my fondness well ; for, on my return to the hotel to prepare for leaving York, I felt an unusual heaviness on my mind. It seemed to me that I had passed, in the walk I had left, the sweetest moments I had ever known, only to lose them for ever. Yet there was something in the sweetness which I would not have exchanged, to be released from all the bitterness I underwent. I felt like the great Ormond, when, though worn with grief for the loss of the gallant Ossory, he exclaimed with exultation, he would not exchange his dead son for any living son in Christendom. So I, though my reverence for Bertha had been enhanced a hundred-fold, and the thought of parting from her, perhaps for ever, was almost insupportable, yet this farther advance to intimacy with her engaging character brought along with it a delight, which more than balanced the grief of losing her. I thought of my own couplet—

“ The bliss of sensibility
Doth richly overpay the pain.”

In the evening there was another ball, which it cost me fifty changes of resolution before I could decide to attend it or not. As it was, I came to a sort of compromise. I would not enter the room, but determined to see what passed in it, without being seen, and I actually disguised myself in the great coat of the landlord of the inn, and took my stand among those of the servants who were allowed to wait at the door, just within the room.

My design was at least fulfilled ; for though I could not see far into the gay throng, I occasionally discovered the only thing I sought for—the movements of her who now so entirely absorbed me. Strange to say, though she again danced with Sir Harry Melford, and could not fail of dancing with her usual elegance, it was not with her usual spirit ; and when she reached the bottom of the dance, close to the entrance where I was standing, she begged to sit down, to which, with proper politeness, her partner agreed. Yet there seemed a constraint in the manner of each towards the other, which surprised me.

What a situation for a lover, to be standing unknown within ear-

shot (for there was but one person between us), of my mistress and my rival ; for rival Sir Harry to my fears evidently appeared. Nor, had I been even his equal, or superior, was he to be slighted. He was a man of uncommon elegance and manliness of manner, at the same time marked with those soft yet frank attentions which always engage so much of a woman's attention in return. The constraint, therefore, which I observed in both, seemed to me to proceed either from something very critical that had passed, or was expected to pass, between them. She complained of head-ache and fatigue, and he lamented it, of course ; but each seemed rather absent, till he imputed it to a long walk which he said he understood she had taken that morning. This she assured him, in a more collected tone, could not possibly have done her harm, but rather good, for it had been remarkably agreeable ; and then she asked if he had ever seen the brook, which she thought the prettiest thing about York.

"I should have been fortunate," said Sir Harry (as I thought, with something like coldness), "if I had been allowed to have been one of your party, by being informed of your intention. I am told too you had a very animated discourse on a most interesting subject."

"He who told it you," replied Bertha, "who I suppose was my cousin, I believe could give very little account of it, for he owned he did not understand it himself, and I most thoroughly believed him."

"You had your brother's Oxford acquaintance with you, I hear," said Sir Harry.

"My brother's friend and schoolfellow," replied Miss Hastings.

"A great enthusiast, is he not?"

"A man of feeling, certainly, and seemingly of genius, or he would not be such a friend of Mr. Granville."

"Granville patronizes him, I believe, at Oxford."

"I do not think that is a word to apply to Mr. De Clifford," replied Bertha ; "he is at least a gentleman, and of very ancient birth."

Sir Harry looked grave, and replied, "He is at least fortunate in having *your* good word, Miss Hastings."

"That will be of little advantage to him," answered she, in rather a hurried tone. "But I feel quite recovered, and if you please we will stand up."

Sir Harry bowed, and observed, before they moved away,

"Be assured, Miss Hastings, I meant to do any thing but disparage Mr. De Clifford, whose birth and talents I am aware of, as well as the inequality of his fortune to the former prosperity of his family. I should be glad to make his acquaintance."

"It would not disgrace you," said Bertha ; and they rejoined the dancers.

Indefinite, slight, and transitory as this was in itself, to me it was all interesting, and gave me subject for rumination the whole

night. Having followed, therefore, the speakers with my eye till I lost them in the crowd, and there seemed no chance of seeing them again, I resolved to retire, which I did, full of a thousand vague and indeterminate thoughts. For though to the conversation I had heard nothing important seemed to attach, to me it was attended with an indescribable effect. I turned it every possible way, I ran over it twenty times in the night, and it was, on the whole, pleasing, though I could not exactly tell why. All that I knew was, that though I feared Sir Harry, I could not help respecting him, and that to Bertha I felt bound more than ever.

The next morning opened very different matters. True to my breakfast appointment with Granville, I hoped to hear much from him, though I knew not what; for, as I had seen him with the party the preceding evening, I was sure every thing would be interesting that he had to tell.

He began by rallying me on the impression which what he called my spouting had made the day before, on the ladies in the walk. My heart immediately beat high, and I panted to hear something of Bertha. Alas! it sunk into very ordinary beating when he could only cite Mrs. Mansell and her daughter as having made any remark.

"Yet," said I, "Miss Hastings seemed quite as much impressed."

"O! yes, no doubt of it, only she did not happen to mention it as the others did."

My hope immediately fell.

"Except, indeed," added he, "to join with them in feeling sure you were the author of the lines."

"Well, I care not," said I; "the mistress addressed was, as you say, merely ideal."

"So I told them," said Granville.

"And how came you," cried I, "to tell them what you certainly did not know?"

"Beg pardon," said he, "I did not think it was of any consequence; but I will certainly rectify the mistake by telling them that, though without hope, you are really and desperately in love."

"Not for the world," I exclaimed.

"Some Oxford queen, perhaps," said he.

"Nothing so little likely; besides, I only wrote the lines three days ago, on the side of the brook."

"O! I understand you," said he; "it is a York mistress, then, or a mistress *at* York, that inspired you," and he looked very significantly. "But our tea and toast are getting cold."

Now these few words had deprived me of all appetite. I feared my secret was discovered, and could not eat a bit. He perceived it, for his observation in these matters was keen, and his own romantic disposition made him alive to mine. As he really, therefore, felt

an interest about me, he would not let the subject drop, but rushed, indeed, at once to the point.

“My dear Hugh,” said he (for so he had used to call me at Oxford), “I wanted not this eagerness of yours to discover what you are ill able to conceal—that you are caught by the sweet beauty, and sweeter character, of my pretty kinswoman, and that your stanzas, and the romantic devotion of hopeless love which you professed yesterday, all took their birth from her.”

This sudden attack confounded me, so that I had not a word to reply, and I looked the disconcerted thing I felt. But I was still more alarmed when he continued :—

“My real regard for you, added to what I think my knowledge of what your heart, if seriously moved, will make you suffer, would cause me to fear for this discovery, if I did not hope that it was the mere fleeting admiration of an hour; such a one as I own I myself, at your age, have felt without mischief, and such, I trust, it will be with you.”

“Supposing your surmise true,” said I, not a little confused, “may I ask your reason for your fear of the one, or your hope of the other?”

“Simply because I think you much too good a fellow to encounter the certain shipwreck of your happiness, as well as of all your prospects in life. This will indubitably attend your perseverance in an inclination (I will not yet call it a passion) which never can succeed.”

Observing I looked in consternation, perhaps annoyed, he went on with increased earnestness, but also with an increased kindness of tone :—

“If you think I am taking too great a liberty, I have done. If you think me only a friend, anxious for your welfare, you will open yourself freely to one who, though still young enough to know what a warm-hearted youth can feel for such a creature as Bertha, has ten years more of experience than you, and may therefore not be despised.”

“You think then,” said I, in a tone less dogged than I was at first inclined to be, “that Bertha might at least justify the passion you suppose me to feel?”

“First tell me,” returned he, “whether I am right. But, whether right or wrong, I am free to say, that I think Bertha might justify any warmth of attachment which any person, prince or peasant, might feel; and so, perhaps, Sir Harry Melford has for some time thought.”

My heart sickened at the intimation. Alas! thought I, they are engaged. I gave a deep sigh, and mournfully said, “I at least understand and thank you now, for cautioning me so kindly. As a

relation, they have confided to you that Sir Harry and Miss Hastings are betrothed. Believe me, I am glad—very glad.”

And so I was ; for, heavy as it weighed upon me, a gleam of common sense opening to my mind, I thought this the likeliest of all things, by putting an end to all possibility of prospect, to put an end to all my illusions. I was therefore almost sorry to be brought back again into the region of doubt and doating, by Granville’s saying, “ Sir Harry has attractions, and I wish, for his sake—indeed, for both your sakes—that your fears were founded. But whatever *his* wishes, they are at least not yet accomplished ; the pretty Bertha says her hour is not come.”

My heart danced at this, yet I was a fool for allowing it to do so ; for what could it do, but plunge me deeper in uncertainty and despair.

“ Am I to understand, then,” said I, “ that Sir Harry has offered and been refused ? ”

“ Not refused ; yet not accepted. In the first place, her only feeling is that of surprise at any one thinking her (being so young) a subject for a proposal of marriage. She says, gaily and truly, that at present she is married to papa. In the next place, a confession of his agreeableness (as, indeed, is not to be wondered at, for he really is a very agreeable fellow), is all that she can feel for him ; adding, with the playfulness of her age, that she has not yet had dancing enough. In all this, she is supported by Mr. Hastings, while Sir Harry is as strenuously backed by Foljambe, who, with his usual vehemence, points out instances of brides of not merely seventeen, but of one, and even two years younger. If Sir Harry, therefore, pursues his suit, and when the lady has had dancing enough, he possibly may succeed.”

“ Happy Sir Harry ! ” cried I ; “ what is this but acceptance, only made sweeter by

‘ Sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ? ’ ”

“ Sir Harry does not think so,” said Granville, “ nay, has crotchets of his own about love, and thinks a lady, who will not yield at the first summons, must either be engaged, or can never feel what alone will satisfy him. All this, however, I should not have told you, but that you are concerned in the breach it is likely to create between two persons who have hitherto loved one another as a brother and sister ought, but seldom do.”

“ Good God ! Foljambe !

“ Yes ! he is furious, for he has set his heart upon the match, and quarrels bitterly with Bertha for not acceding ; with her father, for declaring that there shall be no compulsion ; and with Sir Harry, for refusing to persevere. You know his vehemence ; but this alone is not what concerns you.”

“What does?” asked I, with eagerness.

“This; and it is what made me counsel you as I did. Your attentions, as Foljambe calls them, to his sister at the ball, where you saved her from falling, filled him with jealousy and anger at the time; and the *dénouement* with Sir Harry occurring the very next day, he is furious in the notion that she may give you a thought. He accuses her to his father for having ever looked upon you with even civility; and, having heard of what passed at the brook, and all your romance there, though communicated by a fool, his rage is at its height. He recollects, he says, too great an intimacy at Foljambe; curses the hour when you were admitted there; and was angry with me for giving you a good word. In short, his violence, always in extremes, here knows no bounds. I am glad, therefore, that you are leaving the town to-day, for, I would not have you meet for the world.”

All this was wormwood to me, and I was seriously grieved; yet, for the life of me, could not help being anxious to know whether there was any, or what, foundation for the supposition that such a comparative outcast could have engaged any, the smallest portion of Bertha's favour. Were I to have been banished, or to have banished myself for ever, the thought of such a thing would have been meat and drink to me for the rest of my life; but to ascertain it, even if Granville knew it, was impossible, without exposing me to the suspicion of a vanity too egregious to encourage. I would have given more than I possessed to have asked the question, but was ashamed,—when Granville himself explained all he knew in finishing his narration.

It seems it was the sapient Mansell who had infused all this jealousy into Foljambe, both in his remarks upon what passed in the ball-room, and in observing in Bertha's presence, that she seemed never so much at her ease with anybody as with me. To this she made a memorable reply:—

“Poor fellow!” said she; “he had need for some one to seem easy with him, where others, after professing eternal friendship, shew nothing but

‘Hard unkindness’ altered eye.”

“I cannot tell you,” said Granville, “how I admired the decision and self-possession in one so young, and usually so sportive, with which she said this.”

“O! my friend,” cried I, “can you be surprised at me? is she not an angel?”

“Cease your rapture,” answered he, looking more grave, “till you have heard the conclusion; for she added with dignity, ‘I say this to you, brother, who have no right to disdain, for no cause, the man you once loved like an equal; and also to this officious

gentleman (meaning Mansell), who pretends to report what he has not mind enough to understand ; but if either of you suppose, from what passed yesterday, or this vindication to-day, that Mr. De Clifford has ever conceived what you do him the wrong to impute to him, or that I think as I am impertinently supposed to do, the supposition is not only offensive and unjust, but slanderous. I desire, therefore, to be no more affronted by such insinuations.'

" You see," concluded Granville, " that the spirit of the family is not confined to Foljambe. Her father, who was present, praised her for this speech ; Mansell crouched under it ; but Foljambe had not the generosity to say he was sorry, or even satisfied. The feeling of the whole family, however, including Bertha herself, being thus made known to you, I do hope, my dear Hugh, that if only for your own pride's sake, to say nothing of prudence and happiness, you will drive this youthful ebullition from your heart ;—a thing which, whatever I may have once thought of the difficulty of a conquest over love, is not so difficult as perhaps you imagine."

I cannot even now but feel the variety of contending emotions which this narration created within me, and the struggle which arose in my mind upon hearing it. My eyes grew dim—my head dizzy—and sickness came over my heart. I could not speak, and ceased almost to think.

Perceiving me pale, and, as he thought, fainting, the watchful Granville exclaimed,

" Come ; this must not be. I meant to rouse, not overthrow you. But, young and sanguine as you are, you surely must be alive to what both reason and pride demand of you. Even if Bertha were favourable, you surely would not seek to ruin her with her family, to say nothing of reducing her to beggary——"

" O ! stop," cried I,—" stop the unnecessary admonition. Loving Bertha better than myself, you need not tax me with such selfishness. Even could she think of me as she is accused of doing by that proud and unfeeling brother, whom she so well corrected, voluntarily and for ever could I forego the heaven it would be to win her. But my task would then be easy and sweet, in the thought that I possessed her favour, and sacrificed my own feelings to her welfare. Here, however, she herself avows that such favour would be slanderous. All, therefore, is dreary mortification, humiliation, and self-blame, for aspirations mocked, and audacity punished. Oh ! who can bear the pangs of despised love?"

" You will have greater merit in the conquest of them," said Granville. " Nor, as I have said, is it so difficult ; only gird yourself to the battle, and though the contest is severer than I thought it would be, you will triumph like a brave boy. Meantime recollect that Bertha does any thing but despise, nay, evidently esteems you ; which is as much as she does by Sir Harry, though a favorite

of fortune, and supported by her family—you the reverse. Ought not this to satisfy your pride? the wound of which, after all, forms a very principal ingredient in the grief which affects a disappointed lover—which, as you never were encouraged, nor even declared yourself, you cannot be called. But, if necessary for your cure, I could not give you a better history, either of the folly or the cure of love, than my own."

"Pray," said I, "give it me."

"Willingly. *Imprimis*, the lady was an Oxford belle, the daughter of the head of a house, and therefore, in that place, one of the *haute noblesse*. It was my fortune to meet her every evening in one or other of the walks, and it gave me such pleasure, that at last it became necessary to my happiness for the night. Nay, when every body was retiring to rest, I could never go to bed, without watching, as I sometimes did, for an hour together, till I beheld the light of her bed-candle through the crevice of her shutter; nor could I leave it, till the light disappeared (during which imagination was briskly at work), and only then thinking that all was over, and that she had sunk to her repose, could I retire to mine. I think you will allow here was folly enough."

"But did you never *tell* your love?"

"Never. Nay, for a long time I did not know her, yet haunted her upon all occasions. As she was a great walker out, and passed daily by my window, I was always seated till she appeared. I then dogged her. If she went into a shop, I was sure to want something in the same place: if I saw which way she walked, I took a round-about path to meet her: if I did so, I was in glory; if she had turned before I saw her, I was in despair. Meantime, I gave her credit for every virtue and every accomplishment, and became sick and hopeless, because unknown to her. I was at length introduced—found her a fool—and was cured."

"How old were you?" asked I.

"Your age," said he.

I was silent for some time. At length, seeing he thought his case unanswerable, I observed,

"Bertha, at least, is no fool, whatever your Chloe may have been; and though all this may be true, and you may not have invented it for my benefit, it does not apply. It was evident you were not—you could not be in love, knowing so little of her."

"Why not I," said he, "as well as Petrarch?"

"True," replied I; "but your example is unfortunate again, for Petrarch was not cured."

"That," said he, "was probably because he never was introduced to Laura."

If I was to be lectured out of my feelings, and made a convert to prudence from a destructive passion, I was fortunate in such a

friend as Granville; for from perhaps a soft nature, and certainly from his own acquaintance with the waywardness of love, he was better able to soothe and persuade me than the sterner mind of Fothergill. With all my deference for my good tutor, I could not help feeling the difference between them in this respect: for Granville, as I have said, was himself romantic—Fothergill, matter of fact; Granville had often deviated into the flowery paths of imagination—Fothergill had never quitted the beaten track of sober life.

'Twas well for me that at this distressing moment Granville—not Fothergill—was my physician. In fact, he made my case so much his own, and entered so kindly, as well as considerately into my situation, that I was made sensible of the egregious folly of plunging into mere romance, at the expense of the plainest common sense, without being made to feel the humiliation of too severe self-blame.

“Your position,” said he, “has at least this advantage—your mistress has broke no faith with you; you are not numbered among the jilted; you cannot complain of ill-usage.”

“And yet,” said I, “ill-usage might give me spirit, and I should have my pride to retire upon—here all is blank and barren—a weary waste—‘flat and unprofitable’—nothing but a garden of weeds.”

“Say not so,” replied he, “for a garden more cultivated and productive—the garden of the world—lies before you, if you would but look at, and cultivate it. As for your pride, you must surely be prouder than Louis XIV. himself, to suppose you are wronged, because a lady to whom you never breathed a syllable of your love has not returned it, or rather has not herself fallen in love with *you*: and this I should say if you were a duke.”

“I believe,” returned I, “I am a very great fool.”

“Stick to that,” said he, “and your cure is at hand; for I suppose you are not like Orlando, who, when Rosalind said she would cure him, replied, that he *would not be cured*. But you are really not so desperate; for though, as far as making verses by the side of a brook is concerned, you may have ‘the quotidian of love’ upon you, you have none of the marks which the same Rosalind so learnedly enumerates. You have not the lean cheek; a sunken eye; a beard neglected; hose ungartered; bonnet unbanded; sleeve unbuttoned. You are rather ‘point-device in your accoutrements’.¹ Besides, though it were not so, and though Bertha is charming, there are other Berthas in the world.”

I almost started at this, and replied with quickness,

“My dear friend, I like your reasoning, but not your raillery. I trust you think me not so common-place as to fly like a butterfly

¹ As You Like It.

from one flower to another ; or that Bertha herself can be so little valued :—

When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires."

"Good," returned he ; "we shall soon, no doubt, have you an English Petrarch, burying yourself in some Yorkshire Vacluse ; or, like Camillo, flying to the mountains, to live with shepherds. I shall certainly watch the county papers for an advertisement, which will begin with—'Whereas a melancholy man lately left his abode, and is suspected of wandering in the neighbourhood of Foljambe Park : whoever will give information——'"

"Never!" cried I, interrupting him, and unable to contain myself—"never would I stoop to such humiliation. I should not care if Bertha knew all my devotion ; but never should that proud family have such a triumph over me!"

"I hail the resolution," returned Granville, "and upon this ground, if there were no other, I rest for your recovery. But there is another."

I eagerly asked what?

"Your own good sense, and your very love itself for Bertha, whom, if you could win, you would not reduce to beggary and estrangement from her family ; but whom not to have won, even without an inkling of your attachment, affronts your pride it seems, and gives you a right to be unhappy."

"My dear and true friend," I replied, "I own all my folly, and you shall not complain of me. I will discard it, and you shall be better pleased the next time we meet."

"Nobly resolved," said he, "*Felix faustaque sit.*"

And we parted, I trust, with mutual esteem—certainly with mutual kindness.

CHAPTER XXI.

I RETURN HOME TO MY FAMILY.—MY FEELINGS WHEN I GET THERE.—
PLEASURES OF SECLUSION.

Glad that you thus continue your resolve,
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Taming of the Shrew.*

I HAD now to prepare for very different scenes. My father, whom I have not mentioned all this time, because engaged in the business which brought him to York, had left me entirely to myself, and, now the grand jury were dismissed, impatient to get home, he scolded me for staying so long with Mr. Granville.

We were soon on horseback, and I own I made but a sorry companion to my excellent parent. I was absent, silent, heavy, and dull, and listened but drowsily to his observations upon the agriculture of the country. I was, indeed, so lost and inattentive, or, when I did attend, so ignorant, that he good-naturedly gave up the attempt to engage me, saying, as a parting hit, "Ah! Hugh, thou may'st be a scholar, God bless thee, but thou wilt never make a farmer."

It was the last thing I desired to make, and indeed felt at the reproach much the same sort of disdain which Tom the footman, in the "Conscious Lovers," does at the idea of a man in love being sent for a teakettle. The good Mr. De Clifford, however, seeing he could make nothing of me, fell at last into better company—his own thoughts. He was absorbed by what might be going on at home, or what might be the best course of crops for the soil of the West Riding, and we jogged on, to my great satisfaction, in silence. How my mind was employed, may perhaps be guessed.

On arriving at home, I was for some time occupied by the affectionate offices of my mother, and the jollity of my brothers, the last a stronger contrast than ever with my own reserved disposition, now augmented twenty-fold. They, however, did not insist upon my having the same spirits as themselves; which was all I wanted; and though they sometimes laughed at "t' young doctor," for not knowing barley from wheat before it was in ear, upon the whole they paid me due respect, particularly when they found me, as they sometimes did, with a Greek folio before me. Upon these occasions they would ask how soon I should put on petticoats and be in pulpit.

It may be supposed that the Hall-house was not unvisited, and there also kindness awaited me; but the ladies, though they were not sorry to have a dashing Oxford man (for so they called me till they knew better) among their followers, were less than ever engaging in my eyes. Their manners were, like their dress, flaunting and gaudy, and, by contrast, only reminded me the more of that graceful repose and simple elegance which, with all her cheerfulness, characterized the being who still engrossed me. They were animated and lively too, if being loud was to be animated, or being boisterous, lively. But this also, from the same contrast, produced rather disgust than admiration. Who ever, indeed, united so much gentleness and intelligence, with so much animation, as Bertha?

Alas! how was I spoiled, and how much better, I thought, if, like my brothers, I could have rejoiced if the Misses Goff honoured me with a smile. This, however, was of little consequence, and I only mention it to account for the devotion which, more than ever, I gave to solitude. My lone walks were often protracted till midnight; I saw every bird to bed, and was lulled to sleep in my own, only by the far-off tinkling of the sheep bell. Often, indeed, without

sleeping, I would lie in a melancholy, but far from unpleasing, reverie, gazing through the casement, purposely left open, to catch the perfume of the honey-suckle which peered in at the window—

“ While over head the moon
Sat arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheel'd her pale course.”

These, after all, and spite of my hopeless thralldom, were charming moments, nor did I even wish to exchange them for liberty. Thus I was a practical illustration of that exciting, but what most would call unnatural, fancy expressed by the poet :—

“ There's nought in this life sweet,
If men were wise to see't,
But only melancholy :
Oh! sweetest melancholy !”

The melancholy of a lover, however, is often very different from that which is usually designated by the word. Though hopeless, I was not miserable, and I clung to the comment Granville had made upon my situation, that it was not that of a scorned or rejected lover. With the usual elasticity of youth, I therefore encouraged myself to believe that it was only the disparity of our lots which made Bertha use the language she did, when she said that to suppose love between us was slanderous as well as impertinent. I therefore took no pains to perform my promise to Granville, to redeem myself; nay, I am afraid I was rather proud (I certainly was not ashamed) of my chains, and though annoyed when forced into company, I did any thing but what my brothers (and my father too) thought I did—*mope* when alone.

Thus I might say with Gray, mine was rather a leucocholy than a melancholy. Certainly, I might say, my dreams of love were like his low spirits, “true and faithful companions; they got up with me, went to bed with me, made journeys and returns as I did, nay, and paid visits, and would even affect to be jocose, and force a laugh with me; but most commonly we sat alone together, and were the prettiest company in the world.”

In this love of being alone I was not a little assisted by my mother, with whom I was always a favourite, because she expected great things from my attachment to study: she accordingly gave, or procured me, full and absolute dominion over a little retired closet in the gable of the house, lighted only by a glazed door, which opened upon a garden—if a court of some thirty feet square, filled with sweet herbs, and a few of the common flowers, convolvulus, and nasturtium (dahlias were not then known)—if this could be called a garden.

However, there was a picturesque old wall, in which was a quaint

¹ Gray to West.

old dial, much to my taste, and an ample spreading lime-tree, which resounded with the hum of a thousand bees, and was the haunt of blackbirds, and sometimes of a squirrel. It had, therefore, an air of seclusion and companionship at the same time, and as the only entrance to it was through the closet, which I considered as mine, I had it all to myself; which was exactly what I wished.

My father thought I was absorbed in study, which was partly true, and left me alone; and thus, night and day, I remained in undisturbed possession of my mind, which was all I wanted; and that mind, while thus allowed to enjoy itself, became to me a more valuable possession than ever I knew it before.

My hermitage was delightful, for it gave all the freedom of thought and action which solitude confers, without its drawback, a sense of uncomfortable loneliness. All was quiet within, and no fear of interruption from without, unless I chose it,—when the cheerful sights and sounds of a busy farm made a pleasing diversion.

How much preferable to the solitary and monotonous, and therefore uninteresting, magnificence with which the great think it part of their greatness to surround themselves! This indeed was a later lesson, which an acquaintance with palaces afterwards taught me; palaces which, though filled with gilding and diamonds, are generally, from the struggles and passions of their inmates (not excepting their owners), destitute of the great diamond—content; palaces which, if not properly filled, have the sadness of a desert; if filled, destroy from excitement all the calm and happiness of life.

And thus I was brought more acquainted with myself than Oxford, or the world, could have ever made me; and it is therefore that I hail the remembrance of it now, as of a pleasure unalloyed, because perfectly pure.

To this epoch, thus passed, though so young, in what I may call a philosophical freedom, I may attribute much of that contemplative habit, and that observation of life, which have belonged to me ever since, and from which I have derived whatever independence of adventitious circumstances I possess—so much more valuable than all that riches, and still more that ambition, can give. This disposition was greatly encouraged by the perusal of that quaint old ballad which I found in a collection lent me by Sir Harry, entitled (according to the inscription), “The sweete and plesaunt Sonet, called, My mind to me a Kingdom is.”

So much indeed did my own mind chime in with its notable sentiments of moral virtue, that I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of refreshing my memory with some of its stanzas.

“My minde to mee a kingdome is,
Such perfect joye therein I find,

As fare exceeds all earthly blisse,
That world affords or growes by kind¹.
Though much I want that most men have,
Yet doth my mind forbid me crave.

“Content I live; this is my stay,
I seek no more than may suffice,
I presse to bear no haughty sway,
Looke what I lacke my mind supplies.
Lo! thus I triumph like a king,
Content with that my mind doth bring.

“I see how plentie surfeits oft,
And hasty climbers oft do fall;
I see how those that sit aloft,
Mishap doth threaten most of all,
They gete, they toyle, they spend with care,
Such cares my minde could never beare.

“Some have too much, yet still they crave,
I little have, yet seeke no more;
They are but poore, though much they have,
And I am rich with little store.
They poore, I riche; they beg, I give;
They lacke, I lende; they pine, I live.”

These maxims of life, richer perhaps in wisdom than poetry, became my compass, when, as I oft did, I floated upon the wave of uncertainty as to the inequality of mankind in their different lots, objects, and conduct; and they brought me up almost to a level with those who I thought had disdained me; so that I became less and less dependant upon their smile or frown.

In this seclusion, with which letters had so much to do, it may be supposed that Bertha's dear present of Gresset was not forgotten. In fact, it became more my companion than ever, and, as may be imagined, not solely for its use in keeping up my French. I was indeed ever fond of Gresset for his own sake, and, in the humour I was in, fastened with heightened relish on some lines which fell in with my prevailing feelings even more than the wise saws of the philosophic ballad I have quoted. Gresset, I thought, might have been, like myself, tossed in the uncertainties of love, vexed by the frown of the proud, or annoyed by the platitudes of the vulgar; and, like me too, had perhaps courted solitude, when he wrote the following stanzas:

“Heureux qui, dans la paix secrète
D'une libre et belle retraite,
Vit ignoré, content de peu,
Et qui ne se voit point sans cesse
Jouet de l'aveugle Déesse,
Ou dupe de l'aveugle Dieu.”

In the frame of mind I have described, I was particularly de-

¹ Derived from nature.

lighted with this, and his ability, by the force of imagination alone, to turn winter into spring :

“ Là, dans la liberté suprême,
Semant de fleurs tous les instans,
Dans l’empire de l’hiver même,
On trouve les jours du printemps.”

O, charming dream ! I often exclaimed ; would it could always be realized ! But more charming still what follows :

“ Calme heureux ! loisir solitaire !
Quel lieu n’a point de quoi nous plaire,
Lorsqu’on y trouve le bonheur,
Lorsqu’on y vit sans spectateur,
Dans le silence littéraire,
Loin de tout importun jaseur,
Loin des froids discours du vulgaire
Et des hauts tons de la grandeur.”

This was indeed flatteringly delightful to the temper I was in, and though an air-built castle, it was scarcely less pleasing on that account. I longed, I panted to make it more substantial ; meantime was sufficiently happy with the semblance of it under the homely paternal roof I have depicted.

In such pursuits as these ; removed from every thing that could annoy, or renew annoying images ; free from fear in the morning of what I might meet in the day ; sensible that I was improving myself, and with no temptation to distract me from the quiet scene I had fallen upon ; in a little time I found myself calmed. I was still a lover, but no longer that tumultuous, heart-swelling being, hurried to the extremes of feeling, as love, mortified friendship, or wounded pride, obtained the ascendant.

Of Bertha I still thought incessantly, and always with devotion ; but no longer with that agitation, amounting to agony, whenever I thought of my hopelessness. I was still hopeless, but less disturbed, because the hopelessness was complete. And thus I still continued, “ religious in mine error,” and still adored the sun, but was happy in the adoration alone, without requiring that he should do more than “ look upon his worshipper.” In short, I had settled the matter with myself. To love Bertha was my delight, my food ; to think of her, my fondest recreation ; but to expect to gain her, madness.

Upon the whole, I was a gainer, for the attachment was a virtuous one, and as such preserved me from every thing vicious. Listen to this, ye young, while yet untainted in the world ; for whatever may be thought by the votaries of eternal dissipation and sensual pleasures, of all the guards that can be set over our virtue, the most efficient is, the desire to be esteemed by a virtuous woman.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIR HARRY MELFORD OFFERS TO BERTHA, AND IS REFUSED.—CONSEQUENCES
OF THIS TO ME, IN THE FAMILY AT FOLJAMBE.

Think, therefore, on revenge, and cease to weep.

SHAKSPEARE.—2 *Henry VI.*

As mine is the history of mind, ungarnished by adventure, or any of those stirring incidents or mysteries which, and which alone, can kindle the attention of the reader of romance, I expect, if they have not closed the book already, they will close it now. Yet perhaps there are spirits which may think the picture I have given of myself, particularly in the last chapter, not wholly without interest. "*Nihil humani a me alienum puto*," was a natural feeling before Terence recorded it, and those who wish to study their own hearts by looking into the hearts of others may perhaps proceed; though I give them notice that there are no conspiracies, murders, prisons, or elopements; not even a seduction, or a ghost, to be found in my story.

But though I should be glad to please the world, as I write chiefly to please myself, I shall proceed.

The repose, or what may be called the lull of my mind, which I have described, ran great risk of being destroyed before the vacation was over, by a letter from Granville. He was not, perhaps, politic in the communication, and the date of it from Foljambe Park, spite of my newly-acquired philosophy, filled me with tremor; it was as follows:—

"It will not be easy for you to account for the conduct pursued by Bertha, in regard to Sir Harry Melford. Most obsequious as well as amiable; young, handsome, elegant, rich;—she has finally declined his addresses, and he has departed the place after two months' devoted attention,

'Victus ab it longeque ignotis exulat oris,
Multa gemens ignominiam.'

"If love were not a thing totally unintelligible as to any principle or rule which is supposed to govern it, I should never have done wondering. For even you are liberal enough to confess that Sir Harry was every way worthy of her. The affair has cost her many tears, from the rough and oppressive manner in which she has been treated by her brother. The latter examined her most tyrannically, and with so little delicacy, that the shock it has given to her affection for him will not, I fear, soon be recovered. He was

violent even to fury, and I fear to add what he said of you. In fact, you fully shared his indignation; he accusing you in terms to his father of having made advances to Bertha, and her for having listened to them at York. For this he adduces our cousin Mansell as a witness, who, never a favourite of Bertha, was perhaps not sorry to revenge himself by the colouring (a most unfair one) which he gave to the conversation at the brook, and to another in the ball-room at the assizes. Charles, indeed, traces it further; even up to the visit you made to Foljambe Park when a boy. Of this I could know nothing; but as, out of pure justice to Bertha, I bore testimony to the incorrectness of Mansell's report, I find myself involved deeply in this family quarrel. The worst of it is, that though I can depose most honestly to Bertha's perfect innocence (begging pardon of your self-love) of being moved by *you*, I cannot acquit you (indeed, you would not wish to be acquitted) of the sin of being moved by *her*. Upon my knowledge of this, and with having encouraged you to hope, I was challenged with so much heat by Foljambe, that I could not put up with it, but rejected his suspicions with disdain, nor would I stoop to answer the charge.

“All this passed in the presence of Mr. Hastings and his daughter, and the latter was made exceedingly thoughtful by it, but said not a word; the former was less moved than I expected, or rather he treated the matter with a coolness and discretion, accompanied with a dignified superiority, which made me admire him. In truth, the vehemence of Charles's character has for some time annoyed him; particularly as he sees, what everybody else has seen, that he is of so uncontrollable a spirit that nothing but the absolute dominion over his whole family, the head of it not excepted, will content him. It was hence, perhaps, that Mr. Hastings desired him to calm himself both as to his sister and me. ‘She has declared herself,’ said my uncle, ‘totally innocent of the revolting accusation (you see I conceal no expression) which you have brought against *her*. I, myself, *have more reason than I choose to reveal* to one who usurps so much authority where he has no right to any, to feel sure of the truth of her assertion, and I will not have it questioned. Then, in regard to the conduct pursued by your cousin Granville, I see not that we have any right to complain of him for having made a discovery, even if he did so, the knowledge of which could do us no harm, any more than the thing discovered. Your sister has disclaimed the imputation as slanderous; I will not have her truth disputed, and if you cannot confide in it I am sorry for you. As to Mr. De Clifford himself, who is at least a gentleman by birth, whatever his condition,—if he is unwise enough to place his affection where it is not, and *never can by possibility be returned*, I lament it for his own sake; but you have no right, without proof, to impute to him what it would be derogatory to his discretion to suspect

without reason. You have shewn caprice and ingratitude enough towards this gentleman, whose chief fault, I believe, has been his presuming to give you good advice at Oxford, which I wish you had taken. Meantime I will not suffer my little Bertha to be dishonoured by degrading suspicions, nor shall she be tyrannized over before her time by a brother who I wish resembled her more than he does in propriety of conduct, as well as disposition of mind.

“ This speech, which seemed wholly unexpected by Charles though it made him more quiet, did not make him less moody. He, perhaps, knew that Mr. Hastings, with the calmness which always belongs to a man of quality, had also the firmness which is by no means incompatible with it. He was any thing but humble in his looks, which at first exhibited proud defiance ; nevertheless, in the end, he succumbed under the cool and determined air of authority and self-possession which his father exhibited, and which I really did not know, till then, had belonged to him in all its extent. Foljambe, therefore, contented himself with making a retreat in silence.

“ Bertha, much moved, embraced her father with tears of gratitude, who kissed her and told her he never would suspect her of acting so unworthily, or you so dishonourably, as to entertain, even in thought, what Foljambe, in his passion, had ascribed to you both. He then desired her to find out her brother, and receive the apology which he was sure he would make her for having done her so much wrong.

“ The expectation, however, was disappointed ; for the dinner afterwards passed in cold constraint between the brother and sister, and a sullen gloom on his part towards his father, which did not escape the notice of Mr. Hastings, though, unwilling to revive the subject, he made no remark.

“ In point of cheerfulness, then, we are not a little changed from that harmony which once prevailed, and my regard for you has induced me to make this communication, as a reason for your exerting yourself to the utmost to eradicate those feelings, the mere suspicion of which, you see, has produced a breach of that family union, which of all men you would be the last to interrupt. I am also induced to make it from the absolute necessity there is for you to awaken from a dream which you may more than ever perceive nothing but madness can make you entertain ; for to pursue the philosopher's stone with a hope of success would, I am quite sure, not be so mad as to hope for Bertha. This, indeed, you tell me you never *did*. Can you then have a doubt what to do?

“ As I am not yet banished the house by the modern Tybalt her brother—and, indeed, I think both she and her father would not be sorry for such a diversion as my presence can give—I stay a few days longer at their request ; a circumstance which, as Foljambe has very honestly apprized me, is not favoured with his approbation. In

a word, he is so bitter against you, for what he calls your presumption, and me for abetting you in it, as he says I do, and carries all his feelings to such an excess, that I cannot help thinking there is danger in him. Openness as to the extent of those feelings, and indeed as to every thing, is the only redeeming quality he has, and a great one it is. I wish he would allow me to like him more. Adieu ! I have fulfilled a duty to him and to you ; profit by it.

“ ROBERT GRANVILLE.”

It would not be easy to say what my feelings were on the perusal of this letter, except that they were a compound of grief and mortification, and yet of indignation and resentment at what I thought the indignities put upon me, not only by Foljambe, but even, as I thought, by his father. What could be his reason, which he chose not to reveal, for not allowing his daughter's assertions to be questioned? Had he expressed his abhorrence of me to her, and in his pride thought that sufficient? I felt, indeed, that by them all I was treated as a despised outcast, and in regard to my quondam friend, like old Cassius, I felt

‘ Hated by one I loved, checked like a bondman ;’

and like a bondman, with no power, or hope of power, ever to assert my equality as a man with those who thus looked down upon me. Oh, the throes that this occasioned wherever I went !

One of my favourite haunts was the churchyard of Bardolfe, on account of a walk of limes, the foliage of which, in the old quaint fashion, was cut into arched windows which overlooked the Bardolfe river, washing the ruins of the old castle, and therefore to me full of deep interest, not lessened by the thought of who had been and who was now the owner of it ; flattering the heart as well as the imagination with the semblance of a connection between them, however far fetched. Here I had sometimes recovered myself into calm after agitation, and here I directed my steps on the present occasion, hoping the same result. But the crisis was too violent ; and after pacing the walk several times, the letter open in my hand, read, and re-read, till I could read no more, I found myself exclaiming,

“ Which way I fly is hell—myself am hell ;”

and throwing myself at the foot of a tree, though I gazed apparently upon the landscape below, for a long time I gazed upon vacancy.

By degrees my power of vision returned : I began to discern objects ; the river, the quiet meadows through which it flowed ; the tranquil cottages which bordered it. These, as they always did, diverted my thoughts, and the paroxysm a little subsided, only however to assume a darker character, with a more lasting effect ; for my

spirit rebelled. I could forgive, I thought, the being forbidden to aspire, but not the being despised. The anger of my estranged friend I met with equal fire; but what I called the cool disdain of Mr. Hastings hurt me; and for the first time I became a radical, who could not brook the inequality of mankind.

It is astonishing with what sincerity of disgust, and determination of purpose, this got hold of me, and made me give the whole aristocracy of England to the devil. I then fell, as I usually did when under excitement, into soliloquy, and, notwithstanding my devotion, found myself complaining of Bertha herself, in no measured language;—for

“Wan despair,
Low, sullen sounds my grief beguiled,
A solemn, strange, and mingled air,
’Twas sad by fits, by starts ’twas wild.”

Despair, however, and a sense of affront, by calling out a retributive feeling, will sometimes do great things; and with a noble contempt of all the persons whose contempt, as I thought it, had so hurt me, I once more resolved, though now from different motives, to drive them from my mind for ever. In mere resentment, therefore, I gave myself up to vengeance; which however only amounted to this, that I resolved to rise to eminence in the world.

How I was to do this, I did not stand much to inquire, but I resolved it. I may not make a fortune, thought I, but I am determined to be distinguished; and this shall be my revenge on these proud Hastingses.

The notion consoled and gave me a momentary elevation; I rose from the bank on which I had been lying, and, after taking a few turns in the walk with a firmer tread, I stalked majestically towards home.

In the disposition I have described, as I proceeded from the churchyard hill, I met Sir Harry Goff and his daughters, who all reproached me for having, as they said, deserted them. This, at least, seemed friendly, and I felt so deserted myself, that, notwithstanding my gloom, it gave me something like pleasure. I thought Sir Harry quite as kind, and less pompous in his kindness, than usual; and for the daughters, whether from being really better, because more simply dressed, or that the walk had given a peculiar freshness to their complexions; or because, from some unknown cause, they were quieter and less dashing than ordinary; they certainly appeared more than ordinarily natural, and I always was fond of nature.

Miss Caroline, the eldest, and generally the loudest, had grown almost sentimental; and Miss Imogene, the youngest, no longer talked of the titled people she had met at Scarborough. Miss Caroline, too, engaged my attention by saying, while she eyed the ruins of Castle Bardolfe, how much they always affected her with the love

of the *olden time*, and how much it would please her to have a real Bardolfe for her knight. Miss Imogene, on the other hand, asked me a great deal about my Oxford studies, and talked of Addison.

Whatever was the reason, I attended to them more than usual, and for the first time observed that they had regular features and intelligent eyes. I grew gradually less splenetic as I observed this, and, to my surprise, found I was not only able to bear them, but even tried to be civil. It is very certain that the adverse comparison I always made between them and Bertha, was less adverse this evening than it ever had been before.

The walk grew pleasant; and having accompanied them home, I could not refuse their invitation that I should attend their tea-table. After that repast, they obeyed their father's summons to their instruments, one on the piano, the others on the harp, on both of which, it is but justice to say, they discoursed very passable music. In short, to my astonishment, after the excitement I had felt two hours before, and though my mind was still full of Bertha, yet it was not so exclusively full but that I was able to tolerate the presence of two pretty women, who at least treated me without disdain. In the little pomp, too, of their father's manner, there was mingled so much heartiness, that I was able to compare it, without disparagement, with the lofty and awe-inspiring demeanour of Mr. Hastings.

Upon the whole, considering what had so recently absorbed and festered my heart, I was struck with wonder that any thing could mix itself with it, not merely without increasing the sore, but with something like a diversion of the malady. It was a problem in ethical science which engaged all my mind to solve (if I did solve it) in my moonlight walk home.

This was certainly the first time since my acquaintance with Bertha that I thought the Goffs tolerable. Was Granville right, then, when he said, "there were other Berthas in the world?" It is most certain that on this memorable evening I did all I could to think so, and found myself not shocked by a comparison I made of Miss Goff's commanding figure, and Miss Imogene's lustrous eyes, with the corresponding attractions of Miss Hastings.

Let not my readers wonder at this, or call it unnatural. How many lovers have withdrawn their allegiance from a cruel mistress to give it to a kinder one? Witness Romeo—and who shall question the authority of him who described that change? Even in common life, how many marriages have been perpetrated out of mere resentment.

Heaven knows, however, my constancy, even under what I thought unkindness, was in little danger; for when I had thought myself to sleep in thinking whether Bertha was so much superior to the Goffs, I awoke the next morning, decided in opinion, that no comparison could be made between her and any one else in the

world. The evening rencontre seemed a dream ; I found myself still the willing slave I had been, and Bertha still the paramount queen and lady of my heart.

A settled resignation (I will not call it melancholy) now took possession of me, as I revolved all that Granville had written. I quite agreed with him as to (what indeed I had never disputed) the madness of hope ; and this was only strengthened by the account given of the feelings of the family towards me.

Yet, though this account was only natural and to be expected, such is the natural self-respect of man, that I felt more aggrieved than humbled by it. They have a right, I said, nay, they ought to refuse my alliance ; but they have no right to despise me.

As far, therefore, as Foljambe was concerned, with whom I had once been on such terms of equality, I felt my spirit erect and independent, and thought of him with the same disdain for his pride and inconstancy as he did of me for my inferiority. I had done bewailing the loss of his friendship, and cared not for the rest. But Bertha was so entwined round my heart, that I could not pluck her from it, and as long as her own was free, of which her refusal of Sir Harry Melford was proof, I thought there could be no harm in enthroning her my sovereign, myself a silent, distant, and respectful subject. This could hurt no one but myself ; and having thus compromised the matter, my interest about her, though not subdued, became calmer, and settled down into a quiet habitual tenderness, unruffled by uncertainty, because destitute of prospect. It became, as I have said, part of myself—even as it were, constitutional—yet allowing me full liberty of thought and action in every thing else, and free to attend to all objects of improvement and amusement or observation that might present themselves.

One good (a lasting one, as I have before observed) arose from it—it kept me purer ; for the thought of her character and manners confirmed and preserved whatever good there was in my own.

In this improved state I returned to college, where I was received with all his usual kindness, and, I may add, his usual curiosity, as to the state of my mind, by the good and observing Fothergill.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I OPEN MY WHOLE MIND TO FOTHERGILL.—HE SETS BEFORE ME THE PRACTICAL DANGERS OF MESALLIANCE.

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Othello*.

THE thoughts of my excellent tutor had, it seems, been much employed upon me during the vacation ; for though he had always

felt pleasure in directing the conduct and forming the character of all his pupils, not only his relationship, but, as he was pleased to say, my peculiar temperament, made him particularly anxious about me. There was something, he said, in the position into which I had fallen, that made my case more interesting, as well as novel, than any he had before encountered; and it exercised all his disposition to observe and moralize.

Fothergill had not himself, I believe, ever been a lover, but he viewed a love case, as he did all others which affected human conduct, with the acuteness of a practical philosopher, busied with the investigation of human life and manners. Mine, therefore, he told me had, even in absence, emphatically engaged him; a proof of which he had actually prepared for me against my return, in some notes he had made of a critical visit to an old friend during the recess.

This, however, was after a frank communication, which, at his desire, I made him, of the whole history of my mind and actions from the time I left Oxford, in which he marked, with his usual sagacity, the bad effects of my irresolution and final discomfiture in the outset, when, against my own fixed determination, I left the beaten road to Ferrybridge, for the flowery but dangerous route to Foljambe Park.

“This,” said he, “must have been the contrivance of the Demon Asmodeus himself, who delights in ensnaring young blockheads to their destruction. I shall have a plaguy task to get you right again. However, some of your adventures have amused me, and I am at any rate glad that the spell which bound you to the brother is broken, whatever becomes of that of the sister. That indeed seems considerably weakened, and, notwithstanding your professions in verse and prose by the side of a warbling brook, you will, I trust, be disenchanted by the business of the world. Meantime I have noted down for you some occurrences in the histories of two old friends and pupils of mine, which bear, I think, so pointedly on our former subject of unequal marriages, that I cannot help recommending them to your attention.

“One of these stories,” continued Fothergill, “is of Mr. Benjamin Bostock, who, not to be sure so highly descended as a Clifford and a Bardolfe, but far richer (indeed a very rich man), had thought himself blessed by being accepted as a husband by a very poor lady of very high quality. The other is of Charles Sedley, well bred, well born, sufficiently wealthy, and used to the very best, nay, refined society, for which he himself seemed most fitted both by nature and disposition, and yet unhappy with a wife of his own choosing. This gentleman, in a fit of romance, bestowed himself on a very pretty female, of vulgar, or, as he called it, middling condition. Both these friends of mine seem to have been worse treated by their

stars than they deserved; and having been entreated by both to visit them, which I did in this last vacation, I kept a sort of journal of the result, which I will now shew you."

On these words, unlocking a drawer, he placed in my hands several sheets of paper, which he desired me to take to my rooms and deliberately consider. I did so, and present a summary of both histories in the following abstracts.

Mr. Benjamin Bostock was the son of a very considerable country brewer, wharfinger, and barge-owner, who, from having been a mere clerk and overseer to his predecessor in the business, rose by his honesty and patient industry, coupled with a great deal of natural sense, to be first a partner, and at last sole owner of the concern.

Without much education himself, he was resolved to give a liberal one to his only son, Benjamin, whom he sent first to Rugby, and then to Oxford, "where I had the good fortune," says Fothergill, "to become his tutor. I call it so, because I never knew a young man of better disposition, or more intent upon improving himself in all liberal accomplishments. He was kind and open in his temper, had a taste for the arts, and a similarity of mind in all things but one, produced an intimacy between us different from the usual relations of tutor and pupil, for it did not end on his leaving college for the world. Hence, though we hardly ever saw one another afterwards, we sometimes corresponded, and he even consulted me on some of his proceedings of critical importance to his welfare.

With many excellent qualities, Bostock had some weaknesses, so common as to find excuse at least in the example of others. Though far from being proud, he was ashamed of his origin, and ambitious to rise higher in society than he felt himself to be. Though the business left him by his father was lucrative, he therefore resolved to quit it altogether, as he had already quitted the homely though comfortable habitation amidst his wharfs, where it had contented his father to dwell. He therefore removed to a purchase he had made, with that view, called Hall Barn. Here he commenced squire; lived hospitably, though plainly; did good, and was happy.

During a visit, however, to London, where he passed a month or two in the winter, he made the acquaintance, through her brother, Lord Brandon, of Lady Cherubina Bragge. The family were high, but desperately poor, and though perhaps, as is often the case, only prouder for their poverty, yet their pride was not of that uncompromising kind which would spurn a plebeian alliance, or rather *mésalliance*, if it was accompanied by a proper equivalent in point of purse. On the contrary, Lord Brandon himself was, even as a young man, a votary of prudence, and his sister being left dependant upon him, utterly without fortune, a man worth a plum and a half, and totally free from trade, though a wharfinger's son, was

by no means, as Lord Brandon himself told Lady Cherubina, to be sneezed at.

Lady Cherubina thought so too, and a very slight club acquaintance, between her brother and my friend, was cultivated—with what views, you may guess. One of Bostock's weaknesses, as I have told you, was a strong desire to raise himself in the scale of society. He was alive to elegance and beauty, and Lady Cherubina, who was both elegant and beautiful, was only prevented from shewing how much she was so by the *res angusta domi*. Lord Brandon, in fact, could supply her with little pin-money; but as Bostock, though not too rich for an earl's sister, might be able to make this up to her, the prospect of doing so, and therefore of attaching her the more to himself, *if only from gratitude*, he said, had no small influence with him in his views to happiness.

In fact, Bostock's nature was generous, and the very contracted mode of living to which Lord Brandon and his sister were forced to submit, while it emboldened him in his aspirations, pleased his spirit in the thought that he could bestow upon her the ease and comfort she deserved.

All this, as the acquaintance went on, was more and more cherished by the moderation, not only in practice, but in sentiment, as far as he could judge from his conversation, which seemed to belong to both the lady and her brother.

“In short,” continued Forthergill's memoir, “an offer was made and accepted, during the interval between which—that is, *after* the offer, but before the acceptance—my friend, to guard against a false step, did me the honour to ask my advice; not telling me that he had already decided. I gave it very honestly, and indeed strenuously, against the proceeding; for I had long before formed those opinions upon the imprudence of unequal marriages, which I have endeavoured to impress upon you.

“Unluckily, my remonstrance came too late, for he had been accepted the very day when my letter arrived, and my only comfort was, that, knowing nothing of Lady Cherubina, I had confined myself to general, and had made no personal allusions. I left him, therefore, to his fate, and as he told me he was happy, I believed him. I could not, indeed, well make out why he had changed the name of his house from the old English Hall Barn, by which it had been formerly known, to so Frenchified a name as Beaumanoir, by which it had been newly christened; but as he told me it was only in indulgence of an amiable little whim of Lady Cherubina, whom he was bound, from her *condescension* in marrying him, to gratify in every thing that was reasonable, and I had no means of judging of the reasonableness of this, though I had my suspicions, I let it pass.

“As he had now been married two years, and his letters, though

few, always announced that he was happy, I also discharged those suspicions. Still it was not without curiosity that I accepted an invitation to pay him a visit in the summer at his new-christened house.

“On arriving, I was struck with what I thought a strange incongruity, in a porch of elaborate Grecian architecture with Corinthian pillars, stuck upon the plain, old-fashioned edifice, whose many gables, picturesque enough in themselves, seemed put to shame by this heterogeneous modern addition ; nor could my quaint fancy help thinking it might be a sort of emblem of the alliance of my friend, Benjamin Bostock, with Lady Cherubina Bragge. When I afterwards pointed it out to him as a want of keeping, which, with his good taste, I wondered at, he, with some hesitation, acknowledged it, and that he had even remonstrated against it; but it was Lady Cherubina’s fancy, which, after all she had done for him, he could not well oppose.

“I quite approved this grateful disposition of his. To Lady Cherubina I now expected to be introduced, he having sent her up word of my arrival, and requesting her presence. But when the door opened, and I expected the ceremony of being presented to the lady of Beaumanoir, I was somewhat surprised with the flip-pant tone of a groom of the chamber, in silk stockings and gold-laced knee-bands, who, addressing his master with the literal answer of his mistress, said, ‘Sir, my lady says she begs you will entertain Mr. Fothergill as well as you can yourself till dinner-time, as she is really so busy that she cannot see him till then.’

“I saw my friend was hurt at this ; but not knowing what to make of it, I formed no conjecture, farther than to suppose Lady Cherubina was a woman who knew the value of time.

“A gay landau and four now drove up to the door, with a footman, a valet, and lady’s-maid outside, and two ladies and as many gentlemen within ; and handboxes and packages innumerable, though no more seemingly than was necessary for so many people. They were eagerly kissing their hands to some one in the window above, whom I rightly judged to be Lady Cherubina ; but what surprised me was, that, far from being eager to meet them, Bostock did not seem pleased. ‘They are my lady’s cousins,’ said he, ‘and have come too soon by an hour, as they will prevent a walk in the garden. I hope, however, they will not come in here, and we may then escape through the glass door.’

“His hope was not disappointed ; for though the door of the room was thrown open, and all the four heads poured in at once, they as precipitately withdrew, as if by common consent, and, without the least notice of the master of the house, the whole party ran up stairs, one of the ladies exclaiming in the way, ‘It is only Bostock and somebody with him ; let us go to Cherubina’s dressing-room.’

“ My friend looked somewhat abashed at this, but forebore any remark, except that they were all *such* friends ! He then invited me into the garden, where I found a strange medley, owing to most fearful alterations in the act of being perpetrated. The original plan of the inclosure had been in the character of the house, old-fashioned, straight gravel walks, clipped hedges, and yews cut into shapes, pyramidal, globular, and now and then a peacock. But all these were giving way to an attempt at both an Italian and a French garden ; much trellis, and many balustrades, forming as much incongruity with the mansion as the porch in the other front.

“ I had not quite recovered my surprise at the cavalier conduct to my friend of his guests just arrived, and we both were for some time silent, till at last, by way of something to say, looking at the alterations going forward, I observed, ‘ I suppose this too is the taste of Lady Cherubina ? ’

“ He seemed a little embarrassed, when he replied, ‘ You are right ; but it is all unfinished, and it is not fair to judge. That trim hedge and all those yews are to come down.’

“ ‘ A pity,’ said I, though hesitatingly, for I saw it was against his own wish ; ‘ those yews seem five hundred years old, and assort so well with the house.’

“ ‘ True,’ said he, ‘ but things are not advanced enough to be understood, and everybody allows Lady Cherubina has so exquisite a taste, and she was so decided about it, I thought it a pity, and useless, to thwart her.’

“ I felt this unanswerable, particularly the last part of the assertion, so tried to change the subject, but was saved the trouble by another barouche and four, the very counterpart of the first arrival (dead and live lumber inside and out), which drove up to the porch and began to unload.

“ Seeing my surprise and almost dismay at this, Bostock observed, ‘ It is only Lord Gayhurst, and his two sons and daughter, the uncle, and some more cousins of Lady Cherubina ; they always come here preparatory to the first of September. Perhaps I ought to have apprised you of it, knowing your retired habits ; but to tell you the truth, I was afraid you would not come if you had known it.’

“ ‘ I trust there are no more,’ said I, somewhat annoyed ; which I saw rather discomposed him.

“ ‘ I am not sure,’ answered he, again somewhat embarrassed, ‘ for visitors are always Lady Cherubina’s province ; and I never know exactly—that is, she does not always tell me how many or whom she invites.’

“ ‘ Is that quite so comfortable or convenient ? ’ asked I ; but seeing that he was a little flurried, I added—heaven forgive the equivocation—‘ it at least shews on what very pleasant terms you must be together.’

“ ‘Why, yes,’ replied he, ‘it is pleasant to have no restraint on either side, and Lady Cherubina has done so much for me, that it would be hard if she was not her own mistress in these respects.’ ”

“ ‘Or in any others,’ I was about to add; but recollecting we were not at Queen’s, I checked my tutorlike customs, and was silent. ”

“ I own I was annoyed by the prospect of all this company, having promised myself a quiet week with my old pupil, to say nothing of a wish to investigate his real position as a husband, in a marriage so unequal in point of rank. Not that I thought there might not be happiness if each party studied the thing as they ought; that is, if the gentleman made up his inferiority in birth and connections by great decision of character and superiority of mind, and the lady had sense and moderation enough duly to appreciate his merits; but here I doubted both. Bostock was too sensitive, I had almost said too modest, too much alive to his own deficiencies in birth and breeding, to be firm in asserting himself against his highbred wife, if she chose to oppose his authority; and, from what I have heard, the Lady Cherubina was no cherub in nature, whatever she might be in name. ”

“ But the awful ceremony of introduction now approached, and put an end to all my speculations. For I felt forced to brush up all my old recollections of the fine manners I had formerly seen, when I found myself in a rich drawing-room, furnished in the most costly taste by this high lady, and surrounded by half a dozen of her high relations, with no one of my own degree to give me countenance, except my friend, who, though the master of the house and giver of the feast, I grieve to say, seemed to stand quite as much in need of countenance as myself. ”

“ His wife, to do her justice, was a very magnificent person, tall and well-shaped, with a commanding, perhaps I might say a haughty air, eyes like basilisks, and hair in dark profusion. The former flashed incessantly, and yet seemed to have but little sentiment in them. She was any thing but soft; fitter we might say for a queen among subjects, than the wife of a *bourgeois gentilhomme*, which, with all his merits, I am afraid, in the midst of his fine company, my poor friend appeared to be. ”

“ Indeed, the company seemed so to consider him, and when he saluted them, returned him but a slight recognition—the men with a distant jerk of their chins, the women with a slight bend, instead of a courtesy; no shaking of hands, but all immediately turning away to talk to the sovereign lady. Lord Gayhurst, who, from not being admitted into the younger circle, (*faute d’agrémens*), himself wanted employment, was the only person who seemed disposed to converse with him. ”

“ All this engaged me during the four or five minutes which passed before I was presented, for which I prepared myself with

due resignation, yet a little wondering at the delay. For Bostock, though so generally hearty in his manner, shewed no alacrity to perform this necessary ceremony. Indeed, the lady was obliged herself to force it on, and, coming to the place where I stood at her husband's elbow, said, in a loud, decided tone, but with a visible air of condescension, promising even to be one of protection if necessary, 'You are Mr. Fothergill, I suppose, my husband's tutor formerly at Oxford. I have often heard him speak of you, and your visit will make him happy. Indeed, he often wants the society of an old friend of his own set, to talk of former days, which is what he can seldom do here among so many strangers. I am quite glad you have come, for it will put him in his element, and be a comfortable change for him.'

"Having said this, she returned to her friends in the circle she had left, who all seemed to admire her for such proper and amiable condescension.

"To own the truth, she did it vastly well; whether friend Bostock had reason to admire her too, especially when she talked of his being among strangers in the midst of his wife's family, is another question.

"When dinner was announced, being no stranger to the etiquette which prevails in fashionable life upon these occasions, I was curious to observe what would be the proceeding; and as I knew my own place, that is, that I had no place at all, I very quietly kept behind, watching the rest of the party.

"And here I rather felt for my timid pupil. As master of the house, there could be no doubt of his duty, which was, to offer his arm to the lady of the highest rank. This was Lady Sophia Gayhurst, who probably, knowing what custom required, could not have refused it; but seeing him rather falter, and uncertain what to do, she, nothing loath (indeed, very willingly), took the arm of a more lively and more decided personage, a well-dressed Mr. Wilmot, who stepped in critically between her and Bostock, whom he thus threw out.

"The worst was, that as all the other guests, in expectation of his escorting Lady Sophia, as a thing of course, had matched themselves, he was left without a mate, and instead of leading the van, brought up the rear, with me for a partner;—nor was he relieved by hearing Lady Cherubina laughingly exclaim, 'That is so like Bostock's awkwardness.'

"At dinner this little accident was not without its consequences; for Lady Sophia, having secured Mr. Wilmot, forgot that Bostock, as master of the house, had a sort of right to her as a neighbour, and scudding to the upper end of the table, seized a chair next to Lady Cherubina; and this seemed so preferable an arrangement to the lady next in precedence, that she too abandoned the lord of the

feast, and the rest following the example, he was left altogether without notice, with only myself and a brother clergyman, who happened to dine with us, for his supporters.

“Though in reality this was a relief to him, as it delivered him from the irksomeness of talking to unwilling ears, I saw plainly that he was disconcerted ; and he was certainly not consoled by his lady’s remark from the other end of the table, that Lady Sophia had only properly punished him for his want of attention. At this Lady Sophia laughed, the other ladies giggled, and the laugh and the giggle were echoed by the male cousins, all men of determined fashion. Bostock had nothing left for it but to laugh too, which he did, rather awkwardly, and took refuge in carving ; which, and being able to talk without restraint with two musty parsons, one on each side, consoled him in the end for the seemingly total neglect of the rest of the company.

“I own I felt outraged by this gross breach of *good* (which I have long found is by no means the same as *fine*) manners, for I need not tell you that the most distinguishing feature of genuine high-breeding is to shew the respect due to every one who has not forfeited it, and not to imagine that you can elevate yourself by an affected contempt of others : those who do this are the real vulgar.

“Having thus taken measure both of the lady of the house, and my fellow-guests, I gave my whole attention to where alone it was due, my forlorn friend, for such he seemed. After the ladies had retired, therefore, I suited myself to the seeming wishes of the young men, who preserved their distance at the other end of the table, by making no advance towards a junction with them.

“Whether from timidity or resentment, Bostock seemed to have the same feeling, nor did he at all join in their conversation, though it was entirely engrossed by their prospect of sport in his different manors, of which they seemed to think him the mere trustee for their use. We, however, did not refuse the alliance of the old gouty Lord Gayhurst, who hobbled to us, glass in hand, so that between the young honourables and our party, though that of their host, like that between Lazarus and Dives, a great gulf seemed fixed. Admirable proof of high civilization!

“The same boundary line that divided the plebeian husband and his friends from his lady wife and her relations was marked out in the drawing-room, after we had rejoined the latter at coffee. Unwilling, I suppose, to interrupt the reminiscences of former days between her husband and me, Lady Cherubina left us entirely to ourselves, and this accommodating disposition being fully shared by all her cousins, male and female, we took refuge on a sofa, which seemed to have been left vacant for that purpose at the other end of the room.

“Meantime my brother reverend, being equally excluded, seized

upon a splendid edition of the *Contes Moraux*, which lay open on the table, though he understood not a word of French, and devoured its fine plates for want of something to do. Bostock and I, therefore, were again left alone, as in a crowd, though in his own house.

“*You* would have been annoyed at all this; *your* blood would have been up; *you* would have complained of rudeness, and what not. At your age, I might have done the same; at mine, such things are too properly appreciated to give uneasiness. There was no rudeness *intended*, though there was most entire indifference; and what right had a rusty college tutor to expect any thing else? To be sure, as her husband’s friend, her husband’s guest, and in her husband’s house, which house was only hers through him, she might have shewn me a little more attention; but as she shewed none at all to her husband, and all her friends followed her example, of what could I complain?

“In short, instead of a guest, I turned myself into a philosophic spectator of what was exhibiting, and in truth, it let me into a secret, or rather, confirmed me in a secret I had long suspected, that poor Bostock, the wharfinger’s son, had reaped no happiness from his marriage with an earl’s daughter.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE ADVICE GIVEN BY MR. FOTHERGILL TO MR. BOSTOCK, AND HOW IT WAS RELISHED.

Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o’ the milk of human kindness
To take the readiest way.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Macbeth*.

“THE evening,” continued Fothergill’s memoir, “now drew to a conclusion. The total absorption of his guests by Lady Cherubina, or by one another, to his own utter exclusion, was not less disgusting than remarkable. On one or two occasions he advanced from his sofa to the favoured circle, but soon returned, for nobody spoke to him, or if he spoke himself, nobody listened. He had no key to their mystifications; he had not, as Labruyère says, ‘*leurs usages, leur jargon, et leurs mots à rire*.’ They seemed to be engaged in the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, and when he approached, looked upon him as profane.

“Once, when he only spoke to propose to the young lord, Lord Gayhurst’s son, to shew him a particular beat the next day, where the game promised to be plentiful, he was cut short by the youthful aristocrat’s coldly thanking him, but begging he would not trouble himself, as he had himself already settled it all with the keepers.

“ Bostock returned to his couch evidently hurt ; and as I was shocked with this insolence, it was a relief to me, as well as to him, when we all retired for the night.

“ It is inconceivable how I felt for him under these mortifications. I thought of them all night, indignant at his wife for allowing, if she did not promote them, and at himself for submitting to them as he did. I wished, nay thought, to expostulate with him ; but not only I feared the thing was gone too far to be remedied, but I had no right to meddle, and I dreaded the character of a meddler.

“ The next day, however, without incurring this reproach, he of his own motion opened the whole subject, and gave me ample opportunity to tell him what I had observed, and what I thought ; for he very frankly asked my advice upon his case. I saw after breakfast that he endeavoured to get me alone ; a thing by no means difficult, with the disposition which all his guests seemed to have to indulge us ; so when he proposed to shew me a temple he had built at the end of a long shrubbery walk, no one interposed to prevent our being a *tête-à-tête*.

“ In our way, Bostock fairly confessed the uneasiness of his situation, which he feared was too obvious to have escaped me. He said this in a low tone, interrupted every minute by examining whether any one was within ear-shot : but having now entered the temple and locked the door, he grew bolder, looking, however, again up and down the walk which the windows commanded, to see that the coast was clear. He then began his meditated confidence pretty nearly as follows :—

“ ‘ Yes, my good friend, you must have seen, without any confession of mine, that I am in the happy state of not being master of my own house. As for the company by whom I am inundated and devoured, they are out of the question ; I am scarcely recognised by them as more, if so much, as Lady Cherubina’s *major domo* ; and as to being her husband, it seems out of their thoughts, as well it may, since it never seems to be in those of Lady Cherubina herself. These guests, then, (often twenty in number), being first, second, or third cousins, or very intimate and dear friends of my lady, think they do me honour enough in passing the shooting season, or riding my horses for me after the hounds ; for which they do allow me to sit at the head of my own table, though they scarcely think me worth speaking to when there. Yet while they eat my venison and drink my claret, they wonder that Lady Cherubina, with her fortune (*her* fortune, mind you), should not have a more regular supply of turtle, such as Sir John Pamper always has in Leicestershire.

“ ‘ All this time to address me as master of the house, or to suppose we have any common topics of conversation, never seems to enter their contemplation.

“ ‘So much for my guests,’ continued he, ‘which I should not much mind, but that their example contaminates even my servants, none of whom, except the helpers in the stables, and what they call the odd men in the yards, condescend to take orders from me. It was but yesterday that I told the butler I would not allow claret in the steward’s room, and the fellow, instead of obeying, had the impudence to say, “Very well, Sir, I will consult Lady Cherubina about it.” As to my lady’s maid, and a housekeeper she brought with her from Brandon, before them I dare not say my soul’s my own.’

“ ‘All this astonishes me,’ said I, ‘particularly this last; for whatever thralldom you may be in, with a wife whom your love alone might make you unwilling to oppose, to be afraid of these menials—*your own* menials, too—is beyond my comprehension.’

“ ‘Perhaps so,’ replied he, ‘but be assured in their opinion *I* am a mere upstart. Their talk is all of Brandon Hall, and the nobility who lived there for ages, before canals, and wharfs, and barges were known. My lord, his lordship, and my lady and her ladyship, are never off their tongues; not from any particular respect for them, but from very great respect for themselves, since every time they give them their titles they elevate their own dignity. It was but the other day, having occasion to look at something in the housekeeper’s-room, the lady president there, with fury on her brow, began to talk *at* me; telling me in terms, that neither Lord Brandon, nor his father before him, demeaned himself so as to come into her apartment.’

“ ‘Why did you not discharge her instantly?’ asked I.

“ ‘Alas!’ said he, ‘you know not what it is to be married, not merely to a person whom you love, but to one who, being so much superior to you in rank and family, feels both her superior consequence, and how much she has let herself down in joining her fate to yours. To discharge therefore an old, though insolent, servant, attached to her family before she was born, would baffle even your resolution to accomplish, and is, in fact, impossible.’

“ ‘I see not why,’ said I, ‘if the case required it.’

“ ‘It would occasion a breach,’ returned he, ‘and expose me to open reproaches, and perpetual innuendoes, the last more difficult to bear than the first, though both most annoying to my peace.’

“ ‘You have then experienced these innuendoes?’

“ ‘My dear friend,’ said he, ‘there is no disguising the truth; indeed, to reveal it, and ask your counsel upon it, was one of my great objects in begging you to come to see me. It was pretty obvious to me, when I married Lady Cherubina, that I was taken upon sufferance, at least by her family; and though I believe I possessed her affection *at first*, and she seemed grateful for the absolute dominion I gave her over myself and fortune, I soon found

that her consciousness of her cloth of gold was incompatible with any respect for my cloth of frieze. But alas ! this is by no means the worst.'

"He then, in increased agitation, with deep sighs, and even tears, after much hesitation, whispered in my ear, though no one was near us—

" 'You will scarcely believe it, but she will not now allow me to enter her boudoir.'

" 'Good Heavens !' exclaimed I, 'for what reason ?'

" 'Why, she had observed, she said, that nothing deadened the pleasure which married people take in one another's company so much as too frequent and too long interviews, in the power of either to command at pleasure ; that it was the height of vulgarity, to be always running after one another, and allow no place to be sacred for mutual intrusion ; and that, from girlhood, she had always been accustomed to have an apartment so entirely her own, that her father, when alive, and afterwards her brother, had always refrained from breaking in upon her retirement. She hoped, therefore, I would not be offended if she requested to be allowed the same privilege, notwithstanding our nearer connection. 'It leaves my mind,' she said, 'a power of expanding itself with a freedom upon whatever engages me, for which I am always the better ; and then you know,' she added, 'our meetings after these little absences in solitude are always the pleasanter.'

" 'Though I own I did not much relish the proposal, and thought it was not exactly the custom of married people, or that there was any vulgarity in a husband and wife wishing to be together, yet she talked of the matter so prettily, and made the proposal with so much sentiment and delicacy, that I could not help admiring her.'

" 'You assented, of course ?' said I.

" 'Why what could I do ? I did not like to be held up to her aristocratic relations as a vulgar husband, and they, as well as she, assured me that what was proposed was always the custom in very high families ; that the higher the parties, the more their independence of one another, and that nothing so much denoted superior quality and fashion as this domestic rule. I trust, therefore, you do not blame me ?'

" 'I assured him I pitied more than blamed him, and hoped for better things.'

" 'He said he hoped so too, but found he had been doing so for twelve months in vain ; in short, 'She treats me,' said he, 'like a vassal. She has already become indifferent to my wishes and plans of domestic comfort, in the enjoyment of her society upon a more retired scale than suits her taste. She is, as you see, of a very superior mould, and commanding though cold temperament ; which, added to an internal contempt for my mean origin, leads her perpe-

tually abroad, dispensing with me as a companion ; or if, and whenever, at home, she requires to be surrounded by her whole clan, who all look up to her, and down upon me, though fond enough of the good quarters they always find provided for them.'

" 'Neither my fortune nor my sense of independence will stand this, and yet I am so wanting in true spirit that I know not how to break from under it. Alas ! every way your caution as to unequal marriages is now brought home to me. Lady Cherubina herself is not the wife I thought she would be, or whom I ought to have chosen ; and as to her cousins and dear friends, they remind me of Penelope's suitors. But her ladyship, unfortunately, is no more Penelope than I Ulysses.'

" 'Meantime,' added he, 'I have not a friend in the world to open myself to but you, and I hailed your arrival as that of an ally, who would at least give me good counsel, if he could not actually deliver me.'

" 'It were easier,' I replied, seeing him pause, 'to give advice, than to take it. And I could and would give it but for one objection, strong, perhaps insuperable.'

" 'At least let me know it.'

" 'Yourself. For with Lady Macbeth, of her husband, I may say,

'I fear thy nature ;

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To take the nearest way.'

" 'And what is that way ?' asked he.

" 'Discharge these saucy menials, whether your own or Lady Cherubina's. I would almost say discharge Lady Cherubina herself, rather than live in such disgraceful thralldom.'

" 'This, and the warmth with which I said it, had an effect not unexpected on my too easy friend. He started, turned pale, and exclaimed, 'You are too bold ; you know not what you say.'

" 'I know it so perfectly,' said I, 'that nothing short of being prepared and ready to go the whole length of it will ever release you from your chains.'

" 'Perhaps,' rejoined he—'perhaps (I am not sure) I might screw myself up to the dismissal of servants, who think they have only a mistress, not a master. Perhaps I might even be able to close my doors on these suitors, as I call them, who presume to despise me—but Lady Cherubina ! Impossible ! Nay, I know not what you mean by the rash word you have used.'

" 'You may suppose,' replied I, 'that by *discharging* (begging her's and your pardon for the phrase), I could not intend the same thing as in regard to your other tormentors ; but I did mean that you ought to be prepared to meet and brave the utmost resentment she could show, if, after an appeal to her reason, she is so much devoted to family consequence, and so little to duty, as to deny you

your just rights. I suppose,' added I, 'it is her pride only you have to contend with, not her tenderness. No tears; no faintings; no complaints of tyranny on *your* part.'

" 'Little chance of it,' said he, smiling rather bitterly at the thought.

" 'Then if necessary, be as proud as herself. Nature and the law place the staff in your hands; do not throw it away.'

" 'What if she should leave me?' asked he.

" 'Let her! She will soon return. At any rate it is better than to live with her and be trampled upon by the suitors. By the way, an excellent comparison that of yours.'

" He was silent, as if revolving what I had advised, and at last said he would *think of it*; but added, shaking his head,

" *Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ tractas* '."

" I agreed, and only repeated, 'be firm, and all will be well.'

" 'God send it,' said he, and unlocking the door, we concluded our conference.

" The picture I have given of the first day I passed with poor Bostock was so exact a prototype of all the rest, that I need not describe another. We had a few more consultations, but without coming to any determination, and he always pleaded, not unreasonably, that while the cousins were on the spot, there was no possibility of beginning the reform. Meantime the slight went on; lady Cherubina was occupied by any thing but her husband; the guests had it all their own way; and, seeing little opportunity of my doing any good to my friend, who seemed more and more a cypher in his own house, I gladly shortened my stay at Beaumanoir to visit Sedley, as I had promised."

CHAPTER XXV.

OF ANOTHER SPECIES OF MESALLIANCE.—STORY OF MR. SEDLEY.

Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving.—SHAKESPEARE.—*Othello*.

" I HAVE already," continued Fothergill's M.S., "in what I have said of my accomplished friend Sedley, given some insight into his character, which in fact, when I first knew him, and for some time after he quitted me, was one entirely of refinement. He cultivated elegance in every shape, whether in literature or works of art; of which his library, his house, furniture, and household,

¹ "A labour vast,
Doubtful the dye and dire the cast."
Frazer's Horace.

and particularly his gardens, for which he had a great taste, gave proof. He was always full of animation ; had much romance, and a thorough disinterestedness. He was at the same time fastidious to a fault, particularly in regard to women, and from a disgust at what he called the heartless elegance of higher people (a great mistake), thought he had the best chance of finding the companion he wanted in the simplicities which he expected to meet with in a lower station.

“ True to this principle, he married a young person of neither birth nor fortune ; on the contrary, an absolute dependant, but whom he described to me as of exquisite beauty, modesty, and feeling. She was in fact the humble friend of one of his high relations, who needed her as a companion, and with whom he often saw her.

“ ‘She is not so cultivated,’ said he to me, ‘as I could wish, but no matter ; she loves me, and will love me the better for making her so. There is a natural and simple elegance about her, with which a husband may do any thing. Her family are, I am afraid, very low. But *qu’importe* ? I marry *her*, not her family.’

“ I had nothing to answer to all this, but sincerely to wish him happy.

“ For four years I heard very little of Sedley ; and having been often invited, resolved, on leaving Beaumanoir, to pass a few days with him at Sedley House. There at least I should be sure of not encountering the humiliating exhibition of a man of worth and opulence, like Bostock, succumbing to mere pride and fashion, and afraid to consider himself the master of his own house. Accordingly, I took rather an anxious leave of Bostock,—who however, was hopeful enough of himself to promise to write to me the result of his resolutions,—and I crossed the country to take Sedley by surprise.

“ On driving up to the door I was surprised myself ; for I was struck with the air of discomfort which every thing seemed to exhibit. The court-yard was full of nettles ; the steps of an otherwise handsome portico were disjointed ; and some of the windows broken. At the latter, too, I observed at least half-a-dozen heads, some of children, some adults, male and female, but all staring with vulgar curiosity, as if they had never seen the arrival of a visitor before.

“ The door was opened, not by a footman (though Sedley had always been remarkable for clean, good-looking men servants), but by an absolute draggled, dirty maid.

“ But what surprised me still more, when I alighted and got within the passage, was to hear a voice, attempting certainly to whisper, but naturally too coarse to succeed, desiring Hannah (whoever she was) to pull the duster out of the window.

“ This was explained to me on entering the room, by perceiving

that a duster, or napkin, had been thrust into the fissure of one of the panes of glass which had been broken. The voice it seems had proceeded from a tall, fat, massive-looking dame, with a red face, between forty and fifty years old. She was in a dingy gown and coarse apron, apparently the mother of five or six young people in the room with her, one of them a baby in her arms; two of them grown-up girls, not over clean; the others, children, who retreating round her, and laying hold of her gown, stared at me with their fingers in their mouths, shewing little modesty, but much *mauvaise honte*.

“ Seeing no signs of either my friend or his pretty wife, I set down the portly female for the housekeeper, and the children as her’s, though how they all came to be the inhabitants of a handsome reception-room, I could not make out. I was soon satisfied on that head; for the supposed housekeeper, advancing to do the honours of the room, told me at once that she was Mrs. Snaggs; that she was Mrs. Sedley’s mother, and that she was sorry Mr. and Mrs. Sedley were not at home, for they had gone out ‘to take a hairing in their little chay.’

“ I bowed my thanks for the information, to which she immediately added, ‘All these here children are my daughter’s, for she has one every year, and this baby (dancing it till she grew very hot) is the youngest.’ She then added, ‘but these two tall girls be my own.’

“ She then made many excuses for the door being opened, as she said, ‘by one of the low maids of the house, not even by the lady’s maid, which would have been better, but that both she and the butler and footman had been sent out on some business, and as for the boy, who was under the footman, he was never to be found, as indeed was always the case with them boys.’

“ I again bowed my compliments for all this intelligence, but, in truth, could say little in commendation of what I saw, whether of my friend’s, or her own progeny, from the specimen exhibited by their manners or appearance; nor was I profoundly struck by Mrs. Snaggs herself. I was rather, therefore, relieved when she said to the children, ‘Come, dears, it is your dinner-time, and the gentleman will excuse us;’ then, asking me if I would not have a bit of summut for lunch, which I declined, she left me, very little offended at her want of ceremony, as she called it, in leaving me by myself.

“ My astonishment at all this may be imagined, as Sedley, I recollected, in announcing his marriage, had told me his wife amply made up for being only in what he called a middling condition of life, by great softness of manners, excellent understanding, and elegance of person. She could not at least, I supposed, resemble her family in any of these respects. This was to be decided

hereafter, and to amuse myself till my friend should return from his *hairing*, I wandered out of doors.

“What I saw there did not give me much notion of his taste for elegant gardening, about which I knew he had formerly been enthusiastic ; forming himself upon Walpole and De Lisle. I expected, therefore, when I sought and found the garden, to see, at least, well-kept beds of flowers, and well-pruned trees. The flowers and the trees were there, but any thing but well kept. Moreover, my progress in the principal walks was impeded by lines, which crossed one another in various angles, on which were hung to dry whole regiments of the family linen. This entirely put to flight all notion of the elegance which I expected to find.

“‘This is wonderful,’ said I to myself ; ‘some metamorphosis must have taken place in friend Sedley, since he used to talk so feelingly on the beauties of a garden.’ Further research was, however, put an end to by hearing his voice calling me by name, for the clothes-lines interrupted the sight.

“Though heartily glad to see me, he was shocked and abashed in the midst of his gladness. He reddened, and seemed even mortified—was certainly much disconcerted.

“‘This is really too bad,’ said he, after shaking hands. ‘You owe this to my good mother-in-law ; really, a respectable woman in her way, but who will suffer nobody to have a will of their own in any thing resembling the economy of a *ménage*, and particularly of a great wash. I had strictly forbidden this appropriation of my garden to a drying-ground, yet she has taken advantage of my absence for only two hours to order this nuisance to be committed. I hope you will excuse it.’

“He seemed so discomfited with what had happened, that he could hardly reply to my inquiries after himself and wife, and seeing two maids coming down the walk with fresh clothes, absolutely stormed at them. In vain they pleaded that the *hanging out* was by Mrs. Snaggs’s orders. ‘I have repeatedly told you,’ cried he (perhaps, forgetting me for the moment), ‘not to obey Mrs. Snaggs, particularly in this, and if it happens again I will discharge you.’

“He said this so angrily, that it surprised me, for he was a man of great natural suavity. He himself seemed sorry, or rather ashamed of his own warmth before a visitor, though that visitor was an old friend, and began to make apologies, saying, how vexatious it was to be so thwarted. ‘However,’ added he, ‘as Mrs. Sedley’s mother, she seems to have a sort of right to manage these little matters for her, and, indeed, saves her a great deal of trouble by her attention to the children, in nursing and instructing them.’

“The word *instructing* did not pass unnoticed in my own mind, from the specimen she had given me of her qualifications that way ; but I did not think it right to make any remark, and hastened to be

introduced to Mrs. Sedley, of whom, from his accounts, and his having been induced from her merit so to elevate her from mediocrity, I had formed the most brilliant expectations.

“Nor, as to her looks, or at least her face, was I altogether disappointed. It was of the very finest white and red, *teint de lis et de rose*, with dove-like eyes, but little animation; which, considering his love for it, surprised me. Her features were all regular, but none of them spoke; her cheek seemed silky soft, but no dimple; her lips absolute coral, but no smile. So much for her face, which, if it shewed tranquillity, it was the tranquillity of apathy. Then, as to her person, which Sedley had so praised for its elegance,—if that had ever existed, it was gone; perhaps, for a reason which her mother’s account of her annual fecundity might supply. Certain it is, that being a nurse, and, as such, wisely discarding all restraint from dress, though not two-and-twenty, she was any thing but a nymph.

“I expected to be made amends by something like softness and grace of manner. But, though in this respect it was the reverse of the commanding boldness of Lady Cherubina, and there was no affectation, a dead and languid expression of the usual phrases of welcome was all I could obtain. She had none of the coarse loudness of her mother; but I thought I could have excused a little even of that, could it have diminished the Mrs. Shandy qualities which seemed to belong to her. Upon the whole, I did not think the inconvenience of having such companions as I had already made acquaintance with was compensated to my friend by the charms of his wife. But this *en passant*, for as yet it was early to judge, and besides, it was his affair, not mine.

“I perceived that my friend was earnestly, perhaps anxiously, watching to see if he could discover in my countenance the impression made upon me by a wife whom he had so praised, and for whom I afterwards found he had almost renounced the world, certainly the higher circles of it. For he was now, as I soon perceived, surrounded and absorbed by that wife’s relations, who by no means neglected the privileges given them by the connection. The two tall girls, his sisters-in-law, whom I had first seen, now returned with their red-faced mother, their cheeks not yet quite delivered from the mouthfuls of pigeon-pie which they had been cramming: I may use the word, for their large limbs and puffed-out figures denoted its usual effects. They were, at least, desirous that their sister should share her own good things, for they pressed her to do as they had been doing; saying, in the broadest Yorkshire, ‘that the poy was pure good.’

“Mrs. Sedley had good taste enough to feel this, and I saw was disconcerted, but her husband seemed distress itself at the ebullition. He blushed up to the ears, turned to the window, whose

broken panes did not console him, and, as a diversion, began seriously to scold Mrs. Snaggs for allowing the children to play trap-ball within doors. 'There can be neither comfort nor neatness,' said he, 'where there are broken windows; but thus it is, every day, spite of all I can do.' He said this with angry looks—indeed, quite out of temper—in which he seemed to have undergone a change since I had seen him; nor was he softened by the reply of Mrs. Snaggs,—who seemed one of those who, to use her own expressions, always gave to others as good as they brought. 'Why, dear me,' cried she, not recollecting, or not caring for my presence, 'what's the matter with the man? What odds does it make, when you can so well afford to pay your bills? But I declare there is no doing any thing right; always scold, scold, scold! Ah! it was not so when you first married Letty.'

"My friend was now utterly confounded. He dared not look at me, though he looked most angrily at his wife, as if reproaching her with her mother's vulgarity. This frightened poor, gentle Mrs. Sedley, who, with a quivering lip and trembling voice, whispered, rather than exclaimed, 'Oh, Mr. Sedley, do not frown so; you know it always kills me to see you frown; but you are always so angry.'

"At this she threw herself back in her chair, and covered her face with her hands. He immediately flew to her, saying, 'My dearest creature, I am not angry with *you*.'

"'Oh! but you are with mamma, and that is worse,' said she; and she began to sob, which distressed him still more.

"Perceiving that there was an actual scene preparing, and pitying his confusion, which was very evident, I had nothing left for it but to remove myself from being a spectator of the struggle, and fairly decamped, walking into the court, until my friend, either as victor or defeated, should join me and explain these strange occurrences.

"In a few minutes he came out, and very frankly said, 'There; you have discovered in five minutes what I have endeavoured to conceal from you for nearly five years; I mean, how much, between my wife's tenderness and her mother's vulgarity (for I must speak out) I am worried out of my life with contending feelings. Poor Letitia is so soft and bending before me, calling herself always my *protégée*, and me her benefactor, which I cannot get her to leave off—she is so conscious of her obligations to me, as she ingenuously confesses, in marrying her, that it is impossible to assert one's self, even against her mother's coarse and usurping insolence, without being cut to the soul. I am not, as you see, wife-ridden; but I own, what is worse, I am, if I may so say, mother-in-law-ridden and wife-tied. Certainly, it is a less evil to be a downright slave than to have one's hands bound so as to be forced to a daily submission to officious impertinence and unceasing vulgarity.'

“This speech let me at once into my poor friend’s situation, certainly melancholy, if not downright unhappy. To say nothing of his wife, whom he evidently still loved, but who did not to me, by any means, answer the description he had given of her, it was palpable that he was hourly made miserable by the vulgar minds and coarse manners of the relations by whom he was surrounded, and who stuck to him, as he observed, like leeches. ‘I could no more get rid of them,’ said he with a sigh, ‘than I could get rid of vermin, except by destroying them; and this,’ he added, with still more distress, ‘would destroy my wife.’

“I was horrified with this picture of a fine mind and generous heart, disappointed in all its fair expectations of happiness from congeniality of disposition and manners, and I saw in it only another proof of the evils attendant upon a *mésalliance*. I now plainly perceived one reason, at least, why he had withdrawn from those elegant circles to which he had been accustomed, and shut himself up with such inferior beings. I had attributed it to a romantic love and admiration for his wife. I found it was because he was ashamed of her connections, from whom he could not escape. They lived with him in the country, and took lodgings near in town, and every hint he gave of a wish to be delivered from them, while it produced in Mrs. Sedley the most entire devotion to his will, produced also a proof that she thought herself a victim sacrificed to his pleasure. Tears and fits followed fast upon one another, and as she was always either in the family-way, or a nurse, the consequences would have been dreadful. His very love, therefore, stood most in the way of his wishes; and he was thus as much enthralled by the too great softness and morbid sensibility of his *protégée* wife, as poor Bostock was by his haughty mistress.

“This thralldom of his I had farther occasion to observe, in the shocks which his good taste were doomed perpetually to suffer from the companions to whose society he was condemned. At our breakfast, his mother-in-law would have called forth Lord Ogleby’s fearful and emphatic exclamation, ‘Hot rolls and butter in July!’ such was her love for them, and such the quantity she laid in. At dinner, her ponderous form and heated complexion were not softened by a costly, thick crimson velvet dress, in the dog-days. A very large and coarse neck, though made very *fine*, was not fined down by a chain of massive mock cameos, seemingly of Derbyshire spar. This, and the exertion of eating and carving, occasioned her to suffer *profusely*, for which there was a perpetual recourse to her handkerchief—nay, *as she herself told us*, she often required two. Sedley groaned outright, but his gentle lady only exclaimed ‘poor mamma!’

“The two young ladies, his sisters-in-law, seemed so occupied

with the pleasures and labours of eating, (sometimes sucking their fingers, and sometimes the inside of their cheeks, to give a favourite morsel an additional zest) that they spoke little; which so far was an advantage, that it lessened the sources of Sedley's disgust. But who shall tell his consternation when they laded gravy into their mouths with their knives!

"I must not omit an accession which the company had received at our first dinner, in the person of Mr. Stubbington Snaggs, brother of the hostess, a strong-built, ponderous gentleman, with a head very like a bull-dog, and who seemed to realize the representation of the gormandizer in Wilkie's admirable picture of the Rent-day—who, with a large bone sticking across his mouth, is holding out his plate for more, before either plate or mouth is empty.

"After dinner this gentleman confirmed his brother's mortification by proving, from his discourse, that his inward sentiments were as gross as his outward habits. My friend, therefore, seemed relieved from a heavy burthen when, our wine being finished, he asked me to escape with him into the garden.

"Here he recommenced the subject of the morning's complaint. 'It is not,' said he, 'that I love my wife less than when I married her.' Here he hesitated, fearing perhaps that he had opened too much, but went on, as if in parenthesis,—'You see I still look upon you as my counsellor and confessor, though no longer my tutor.' I begged him always to consider me so, and as such to believe me a friend heartily interested for his welfare. 'I trust, however,' said I, 'that the prospect of happiness you anticipated from Mrs. Sedley's attachment, and her capacity as well as wish to cultivate her mind so as to be thoroughly your companion—I trust that this balances all these drawbacks, which, I own, seem great, but for which she at least is not to blame.'

"'My dear friend,' said he, pressing my arm, 'I wish the balance you talk of *could* exist; but were my wife more what I hoped to make her, and really all she wishes herself to be for my sake, I doubt her's, I doubt anybody's power to make me content with the purgatory in which I live. Nothing short of banishing these low relations, and others whom you have not seen, whom, to break with, would break her heart, could restore me to myself; and the purchase, you see, would be too dear.'

"'Mrs. Sedley, then,' said I, 'has other relations!'

"'Alas! a second edition of brother and sisters, the very counterparts of these; and it is astonishing with what indefatigability they relieve guard; so that my house is never free from *them*, or *I* from despair. It is hence that I am driven into banishment from all my own society, among whom, as you must have seen, whatever my wife may be, these people are absolutely not pre-

sentable. But they even, in some degree, contaminate Letitia herself, who, having nobody to please in the article of manners but her husband, and being too sure (she thinks) of him, takes no pains to correct a growing indolence in that respect, which blinds her still more to the faults of her family. The good breeding she certainly once possessed, when with my cousin, Lady Lancaster, is fast ebbing away, where there is nothing but its opposite to be seen as an example for imitation. Her mother and sisters, naturally slatterns, and more so from being totally uneducated, have nothing to preserve them from sloth. Hence every thing they undertake is neglected and goes to ruin, and Letitia is becoming too like them in this respect. Even to dress is now an exertion which fatigues her; and seeing no one but myself to participate in the pleasures of mental cultivation, much less to kindle emulation, it is with pain I see her gradually sinking, I will not say to a level with those about her, (that would be too horrible), but into an indifference to their manners, thoughts, and conversation. Believe me, I am far from happy.'

"At this he gave a deep sigh, and veiled his face with his hand.

" 'Yet her gratitude,' said I, endeavouring to console him.

" 'Ah! that gratitude,' cried he, interrupting me; 'would I could root the word from the vocabulary. It is that which causes me more distress than almost all the rest. It comes too often forward, not to make me think it takes the place of love. Had she been my equal there would have been no place for it, and every little attention, every fond caress would, for it must, have sprung from tender attachment. But to have purchased it, as it were—which gratitude implies——O! the thought is unbearable.'

"He was evidently suffering under this suspicion, and I knew not how to relieve him, as he alone could be the judge, if any one could, of its truth. Every way the prospect was bad, nor was it mended by any thing I saw during the week I staid with him. Mrs. Snaggs and her daughters continued the pictures of reckless and brazen vulgarity, and Mrs. Sedley, although not disgusting, and comparatively polished, was evidently of so inferior a cast of mind as to give me little or no notion of a companion for her cultivated husband.

"I left them mournful at seeing so little hope of improvement in their prospect. Nor did I find greater comfort in regard to my other married friend, Bostock, in a letter I received from him on my arrival at Oxford, telling me that all the *suitors* having taken their leave, he had thought it best to put off the reforms he meditated with Lady Cherubina till some other opportunity."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED, IN WHICH SOMETHING OF THE EXCLUSIVES IS DISCUSSED.

HERE my tutor's manuscript closed, and I regretted there was no more of it;—for the narratives which I have set forth were only some of several which had been drawn up by this observing man, whose disposition and general practice, it seems, was to note down any thing and every thing he met with remarkable in the characters and conduct of men in their progress through life.

These notes he had formed into a volume, which he called his book of human nature, and told me I should probably one day find myself portrayed there in glowing colours, under the head of Enthusiast.

Well! and why not? What great act, or great conception, but owes its rise to enthusiasm? What youth of twenty ought ever to be without it? To be sure, it is for the most part a plunging, prancing steed, which sometimes throws his rider, and often gets him into scrapes, from which he does not always recover; but after a little training, and when got into the beaten road, he goes the better for it in the end.

Much as I respected Fothergill's judgment, particularly in the philosophy of man, of which I had had excellent proofs, I was by no means naturally inclined to take things on mere authority, where I had any doubts of my own to be cleared; and I had many on this very subject. I could not therefore help, on re-delivering his manuscript, requesting a few explanations on the general question of unequal alliances. What was or was not equality on *the whole*, and not partial disproportions, ought, I thought, to be always settled before we came to a general conclusion.

"You are right," said he, "and I am far from being so dogmatical as to refuse a full investigation of parts, in order to make up our minds to a whole. In poor Bostock's case, the inequality was not confined to birth and rank. If it had, 150,000*l.*, liberal education, and liberal manners, superior sense, and superior character, would not only have balanced, but weighed down, a mere woman of quality, though backed by a whole army of birth and fashion, and all the weight of St. James's itself.

"But I fear the inequality here was in the minds and genius, aggravating that of the rank of the parties; and you will please to observe my theory respects inequality of any and every kind, whether of years, temper, character, or education, and is not confined to mere birth or fortune. In this instance, Lady Cherubina knew all her advantages in resolution and vigour over her husband's

modesty, and had not generosity enough to abstain from using them to the utmost. She was a Catherine; had he been a Petruchio, the suitors would never have intruded, and the sister of a poor earl, notwithstanding her coronet, might have condescended to be happy to receive comfort and independence at the hand of a plebeian.

“I have myself seen aristocrats, of both sexes, whose high heads, have ‘sloopt to the vale,’ where pecuniary advantages, or even a dinner, have been in question. They have reminded me of the illustrious Hidalgo, Captain Chinchilla, in Gil Blas, ‘d’une taille gigantesque’ (which I suppose Le Sage puts for pride), ‘et d’une maigreur extraordinaire,’ which I suppose he puts for poverty. This great personage, you know, though literally half starved, and forced to shut himself up, that nobody might witness his dinner of pumpkins and onions, forced the good-natured Santillanna to entreaties, *at first*, before he would partake of his dinner; but in the end, he came round very comfortably. ‘Il voulut d’abord faire des façons; mais enfin il se rendit à mes instances. Après quoi, devenant insensiblement plus hardi, il m’aida de lui-même à rendre mon plat net, et à vider ma bouteille.’

“Thus, as the captain felt his condescensions well repaid by accepting a dinner from the *petit secrétaire*, so many a high dame has *kindly* and graciously submitted to the disgrace of a shower of gold, poured into her lap by some rich and strong-minded merchant or manufacturer (who knew how to assert the privileges which nature and the law gave him), without a thought of rebelling. It is only where the submission is not gracious on the one side, or the mind not strong on the other, that the leaven appears; for, after all, leaven there always is, and it will sometimes shew itself, though it may be kept from dangerous fermentation, by a decided superiority of mind in the husband. Where that is uncontested, the equilibrium is restored; but for one instance of this happy balance, there are thousands of perpetual and unceasing struggles, till poor love is frightened out of doors, never to return.”

I was strongly impressed with this, but asked whether the balance might not be struck, even without supposing the inequality of mind. “I mean,” said I, “where the actual condition of the parties is concerned, in respect to other points, besides rank or fortune,—for example, as to age.”

“That is a nice point,” replied he, “nor perhaps has my experience yet settled it. But, though where the seniority is of the man to the woman, the question has been determined different ways, there can be no doubt, where it is on the side of the woman to the man. I think it is Rousseau who says, that the love of a wife to her husband has always the best chance of happiness when it partakes in some degree of that of a daughter to a father. Here,

therefore, a disparity of age does not *necessarily* infer the mischiefs of a *mésalliance*; but no instance has ever occurred to my observation, in which the union of a young husband with an old wife has not made both parties ridiculous. Prudence, however, is a great leveller."

I asked what that meant.

"You have it," said he, "in the late union, by which the fair Medowes consoled herself for your friend Hastings' loss, when she espoused the old and worn-out owner of Belvidere. He is fifty years older than she; so far they are mis-allied. But the inequality is made up to her by being mistress of Belvidere, which she wanted, but could not have without giving up her person; and her want of love is made up to him by the possession of that person, which is all he wanted on his part. Thus the balance is struck, and each is satisfied."

"Such alliances," I remarked, "are not worth a thought; both parties deserved to be miserable; but I am glad, where the parties are both made for better things, to think I perceive that even in your mind it is possible that a *mésalliance* as to rank may not be unhappy."

"Possible," returned he, "but not probable; for even where the lady (for we are here talking only of the lady being the superior) is devoted to her husband, it is generally at the expense of her enjoyment of her family; and though conjugal love, as well as duty and disposition, may suppress all outward complaints, there is yet the secret grief and inward melancholy, the silent tear and wasted mind, more difficult for a generous husband to bear than dogged sullenness, or downright revolt."

"Do you know instances of this?" asked I.

"One, certainly," said he; "for you know mine is a practical, not a theoretical, philosophy. I had once a friend, indeed a Sedbergh schoolfellow. He was not so well born as you, nor a pound more rich; but with his hard Cumberland brain, patience, and labour, he amassed a fortune at Liverpool, and with a fine person, and open handsome countenance, he mastered the affections of a very gentle and very high-born girl."

I grew agitated at this, and drew in my breath in expectation; which he perceived, but told me not to flatter myself, for what he had to say would do any thing but soothe my hopes.

"Their union," continued he, "was bitterly opposed by all her family, who renounced her on its taking place. Her spirit and love conjoined at first kept her up; and she found in her husband what she thought would for ever support her against such unreasonable neglect. It was not so. The tender and delicate attentions of her husband never relaxed; he never changed, but *she* did. The slights of her family drove her from their neighbourhood; in which, much

to his inconvenience, she was indulged by her husband. They had no children, and she was often left alone. In solitude she brooded, she pined, and when her husband returned, after necessary absences, though always welcomed, it was always in tears. With tears in his own eyes (manly tears!), he has often lamented this to me. 'I shall lose her,' said he; 'she loves me still, and she struggles against her feelings for my sake; but they still prevail, and will break her heart; she wastes and is perishing before my eyes.' He was too good a prophet. After a slow and lengthened fever, with no decrease, but increase of affection, she died in his arms."

Affected as I was by this account, I could not help asking whether this melancholy catastrophe might not have been the consequence of any family opposition, on other grounds than that of inequality of condition.

"It certainly might," said Fothergill, "but such was the ground here, and I give it you as it happened. It is therefore one more support of my position on the mischiefs of inequality."

"And yet," I continued (resolved to sift the subject to the bottom), "do we not daily see what you perhaps call *mésalliances*, without any such consequences? Merchants and sons of merchants, with no blood, matching with the daughters of nobles and statesmen; nobles and statesmen matching with citizens, yet no difference of demeanor on any occasion from what there would have been with the most perfect equality."

"I doubt the no difference in all cases," returned Fothergill, "though, for the most part, the reasons that induce consent to such a connection, in the higher party, carry along with them the necessity for civil conduct at least, as a natural consequence. But in the few cases of this sort which we see, the inequality in one respect is balanced by some redeeming advantage in another. Thus a *millionnaire*, who marries a duke's daughter if you will,—though his grace, even if he wanted part of the million himself, would sometimes perhaps give himself airs which the merchant would not like,—would never, if he had any pluck in him, submit to be ill-treated; and his security in this respect he would of course ascertain beforehand. Sometimes, too, a very noble father-in-law might have a very weak pericranium, and find it a good thing to be directed by his cleverer son-in-law. A minister of state might even find his account in an alliance with a moneyed aristocrat; nay, in associating him with himself in the ministry. In our mixed constitution, also, with such a mingling of democracy in Parliament, a man of parliamentary influence, or parliamentary eminence, might laugh at the highest peer who was a devotee of political ambition and should presume to despise him.

"But in all these cases you see inequality is only partial, and no inequality on the whole. What is wanting in one point is made up

by another; hence the alliance is willingly formed; and once entered upon, it would be foolish to disturb it with jealousies. And yet for all this, where vanity, or the prejudices of high fashion or high blood, are concerned, I doubt the cordiality of such alliances, even where ever so necessary."

"Would not this," said I, "extend itself to friendships and intimacies? And yet, as well as in marriages, how often have we seen the closest alliance between the most unequal conditions—brilliant genius and high literary fame balancing all the advantages of the proudest station, over humble birth, and original mediocrity of pursuits. What an example of this do we find in the high friendships formed by Pope with the greatest of both sexes! What a proof of it in the "Matt" and "Henry" of Prior and Bolingbroke! but, above all, in the rise to the very pinnacle of glory in society of an unequalled meteor now coursing through the heavens, though only a player's son!"

"You mean Sheridan," returned Fothergill smiling; "and I see you have well, and no more than rightly, examined the chances of learning and genius to rank themselves with men of fashion, statesmen, and even princes. Keep them before you by all means; but do not let the *few* examples there are of this kind dazzle you; neither overrate the examples themselves, which, *upon closer investigation, may not prove all they appear to be*; for how soon was "Matt" abandoned by "Henry" when their common party was ruined, and the inferior (Matt) was no longer necessary! Instead of lamenting his death, or even commonly respecting his memory, "Henry" quizzed "Matt" for his bad epitaph upon himself.

"As to Pope, he had made himself too independent of the great, in point of fortune, for the inequalities in that respect to be felt, or even almost to exist; so that his superiority in fame had no drawback. Besides, neither Pope nor Prior was married."

"Can that make any difference?"

"More, perhaps, than you are aware of; for a wife brings these inequalities sooner to the test than any other touchstone. A duke, or the most dandy member of White's, may not be above—nay, may feel a sort of complacency in walking arm-in-arm with some very brilliant genius of the age, although of common-place connections; his privilege of exclusion may even stand the awkwardness of being visited by him in his box at the opera. But if the genius have a wife, how will it fare with her? Will the duke, or the dandy, submit to shew the same attentions to a lady whom nobody knows? or if they do occasionally (to serve a turn), will their own wives or daughters, because they bear with, nay, perhaps, condescend to be civil to, the lion at their husband's dinner-table, be equally prompt to receive the lioness in their own drawing-rooms? Assure yourself

this is far overstepping the rights of 'men of learning and genius,' who, as far as their intimacies are concerned, are supposed to be always in a state of celibacy, and to have no females belonging to them."

I laughed at this sally, and was about to reply, but he had always chapter and verse, and went on with an anecdote of a passage between a certain great political peer (a friend of Lord Castleton) and an eloquent member of his party, more celebrated for his abilities than his family or station in life. "'How can I shew you,' said the peer, 'my admiration of your talents! your eloquence! or thank you sufficiently for the services you render to your party?' 'To be approved by such a friend is reward enough,' returned Mr. M——, 'but if Mrs. M—— might be allowed the honour of the protection of the marchioness, it would be a great gratification.' The marquess changed colour; shook his head with great solemnity, and, shrugging his shoulders in a sort of despair, and a long-drawn 'Ah—you know, my dear friend,' observed he, 'these things are the exclusive province of the ladies, and husbands never interfere. It is the only thing in which her ladyship never allows me any authority.' Mr. M—— had nothing left for it but to submit, and follow, as before, respectfully in the wake of the marquess."

"This is a sorry picture," said I, "and would deter any man of spirit from forming such an intimacy; but this, at least, cannot apply to the illustrious author and senator (illustrious with all his faults) whom I just now mentioned; for both he and his wife, as I have heard from Granville, had almost equal fascinations, and were at the very head of fashionable life."

"That," replied Fothergill, "is not quite correct as to her, though she had all of what you properly have called fascination, to which I, who know her, can bear witness. But I can tell you that she, and her husband too, were not without their mortifications in this very respect, particularly in the earlier stages of their progress from very humble beginnings. Thus, when one of those dazzling comedies, which first founded his reputation, had made all the world mad for his acquaintance, and her uncommon beauty—amounting to the angelic—and accomplishments, which threw every other person's into shade, had almost equalled her with him in attraction; still there was a doubt or hesitation as to their admission into the higher circles, in which it was some time before they got a permanent footing. I have heard that the Duchess of Devonshire long hesitated as to the propriety of inviting to her house 'two persons of such *equivocal* rank, as he and his wife were at that time considered'."

"Although, therefore, they broke through the spell, (particu-

larly Sheridan himself, from his overpowering abilities and fame), the lady, at least, does not seem to have rested her happiness upon her reception in the high world. It, indeed, grew less and less towards her decease, which has been affectingly described by one of her friends who was near her. 'She left rings to Mr. and Mrs. Leigh, and positively forbids any others being given on any pretence, *evidently precluding all her fine friends* from this last mark of her esteem and approbation. She had, *poor thing*, with some justice, *turned from them all in disgust*, and, during her illness, never mentioned them with regard or kindness¹."

"Sheridan himself, indeed, soared to the highest pitch of both fashionable and political society, and in some measure (but not either uniformly or universally) carried his wife along with him; but it was parliamentary reputation, and consequent political influence, that enabled him to do this. For though his literary splendour will be felt and remembered long after his political career may be forgotten, yet I doubt, if he had been only a man of wit and letters, however exquisite in both, if he (and still less his wife, fascinating as she was), would have attained the place they did in the aristocratic classes of the country²."

"I have heard," continued Fothergill, "upon authority, that he (Sheridan) was in the enjoyment of the proud consciousness of having surmounted the disadvantages of birth and station, and placed himself on a level with the highest and noblest of the land."

"This footing in the society of the great he could only have attained by *parliamentary* eminence. As a mere writer, with all his genius, he never would have been thus admitted, *ad eundem*, among them. Their stiffness, coldness, and what I may call inveterate obstinacy in this respect (I speak, however, only of the *English* great), baffle all conjecture to comprehend it upon the principles of common sense. For if, now and then, a little spark of feeling, prompted by something like classic taste remaining still from former youthful impressions, *does* arise towards a real genius, who, perhaps, delights the world, it is all instantly repressed and smothered by the drowsy inactivity of our aristocratic prejudices, which, from either the obtuseness or jealousy of their possessors, nothing can shake off. I remember one of these dull dignities at Lord Castleton's,—talking to him of a writer whom Lord Castleton patronized, and who had charmed all the literary world,—observing, with most pompous condescension, that there was no person he so much wished to know. 'Very well,' said Lord Castleton, 'nothing more easy, for he will think himself honoured by your

¹ Moore,—302.

² It has been as soundly as pointedly observed, by Moore, that talents may lead to an association with the great, but never to equality. They are passports through the *well-guarded frontier*, but no title to naturalization within.

acquaintance, and I will be glad to introduce him to your lordship.'

"The peer gave a cold bow, whether of acceptance or evasion might be doubtful, but he never returned to the subject, or mentioned the poet again.

"What is remarkable," added Fothergill, "the gentleman whom he so much wished more than any one to know had been perfectly well known to him at college, but was passed by afterwards in the world.

"Say what we will, therefore, for the sake of appearing Mæcenas, by him who has not been born among the great, equality of intercourse can only be achieved by *politics*. In that arena which they look upon as their own, the legislature of the land, let a man of genius, like Sheridan, but assert his supremacy, at once all these barriers of reserve and pride give way, and he takes, by storm, a station at their side, which a Shakspeare or a Newton would but have enjoyed by courtesy¹. It is only after death, when their fame is consecrated by posterity, and the puny, temporary self consequence of their higher contemporaries is forgotten, that the palm of genius, learning, and philosophy becomes equal, and often superior, to that adventitious one of birth and fortune, or even of military or political celebrity. Who does not love the names of Virgil and Horace more than those of their patrons, Mæcenas, or even Augustus, though master of the world?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

MY FELLOW STUDENTS.

This speech of yours hath moved me,
And shall perchance do good : but speak you on :
You look as you had something more to say.

SHAKSPEARE.—*King Lear*.

THE lectures of my sagacious tutor in moral philosophy (for such I call the conversations in the chapter last recorded) did me as much, or more good than all the academical lore he instilled into me ; which was not a little. I began to think I profited by them. It is certain such conversations, by alarming my self-love (if self-respect ought to be so called), went far to correct much of that enthusiasm which Fothergill said belonged to me, and which so blinds us all to the truth of things. I began in earnest (for hitherto I had only flattered myself that I did so) to reflect upon the folly I had been guilty of, in having for a moment thought that a gentleman-

¹ Moore,—485.

farmer's son (for with all my Norman blood, mixed and muddled as it was in its descent, I was no more), could presume to hope to gain the affection of one so much above him as Bertha. Or if, with the fond illusions with which love can beguile a youth of twenty, I could in fancy think I might one day be *beloved*, what, short of raving madness, could generate the notion that I could be *accepted*?

This, and the pictures set before me by Fothergill, of the mischiefs usually attendant upon disproportioned matches, began to tell with me; and the absence, nay, total removal of Foljambe from Oxford, to say nothing of the total rupture of our friendship, contributed to leave my mind open to conviction. And thus for the first time I listened to reason.

I could now, therefore, tread the walks of the place or lose myself in reverie upon a bench in Merton gardens, without hankering after the motions of Bertha's brother, or the fear of overhearing things revolting to my pride.

I began also to know and to be known. Fothergill, who was universally respected for his knowledge of the world as well as his learning, and who acted like a father to me, procured me by his influence a welcome into many academical families, whose female members were by no means to be slighted, either on account of their persons, manners, or cultivation. And though I could not but remember the biting things which in his recklessness (I fear I might say insolence) Foljambe had indulged his satirical vein in laying to their charge, the Foljambe who thus accused them, no longer my friend, no longer possessed that weight with me which made every word he uttered a law.

Exclusive of this, I was myself no longer a freshman, and was as capable as resolved to judge in my own person. But though in so judging I am bound to allow I found a few amiable and accomplished females, the die seemed cast against my feeling it. I found many *agréments* in their society, but nothing of that touching magic which a finger held up by Mr. Hastings' daughter always created. I studied their characters, and of some of them acknowledged the beauty, but it was only when they were actually present; for I parted with them without regret, and saw them again without interest.

I succeeded better with the men. With them, there was no contrast to their disadvantage; no tender recollections, no prejudices, and of course none of the absorbing interests derived from sex. Accordingly, my mind had free scope for all its operations, whenever characters or objects worth notice presented themselves, and under Fothergill's guidance of my own natural disposition in this respect, I became, for my age, an intense observer of my fellow-men.

It must be owned, Oxford afforded much food for this sort of cu-

riosity, and as my tutor's forte was knowledge of men, which he inculcated fully as much as knowledge of books, the interest he took in my progress made me prosper.

It was as curious as pleasant to observe Fothergill, when he, as his phrase was, got hold of a character, and set it up as a beacon to warn his pupils (if, as he used to say, they were worth warning), against the various vices and weaknesses of young men,—in detecting and ridiculing which no one went beyond him. The traits of a few of their characters it might be amusing to mention, as well as of my own, of which, he used to tell me, the vice was pride, and the weakness jealousy, to say nothing of visionary romance.

One character was rather a favourite speculation of his, from being, as he said, so perfect of its kind, though that kind was not very perfect in itself. The name of the gentleman who owned this character was Mr. Courtenay Waldegrave Shanks, the foolish son of a foolish father, who thought the two first names, which were baptismal, and for which there was no earthly pretence, might make up for the vulgarity of the last.

Mr. Jeremiah Shanks, the father, had, from small beginnings, raised himself to the rank of a *millionnaire* in the good town of Manchester, which he had for some time left, for one of the best houses in Portman Square, London. On the strength of this, an unlimited allowance, and these great names, he intended to push his son into the very highest society, first of Oxford, and afterwards in the great world,—in which it was the acme of his ambition, if it cost him half his fortune, that his son should marry into a nobleman's family, not under the degree of an earl. For though the name of Shanks was not very euphonical, with a Lady Louisa, or Lady Olivia, prefixed to it, it would pass very well.

The young man's own ambition seconded that of his father; but unfortunately, not having a single acquaintance in the university, and there being no gentleman commoner at Queen's but himself, there was a dead stop put at first to his progress.

In this dilemma, his good or bad fortune threw him in the way of an Honourable Mr. Merriton, a man of original and reckless humour, notorious for what was called practically quizzing all the fools he could find in Oxford—which were not a few. Our hero's foible was the very thing for him. It was not easily concealed; but if it had been, Mr. Merriton's penetration would have discovered it directly, if only from the two christian names which he bore, without any connection with the noble families to which they belonged.

This was exactly the game Mr. Merriton was so fond of pursuing; and for this purpose he did not scruple to make advances to Mr. Courtenay Waldegrave Shanks, which were eagerly met by that gentleman. In truth, the Honourable Mr. Merriton found him as

docile, and disposed to all the follies by which he designed to expose him, as his heart could wish.

"You desire to make a name," said Mr. Merriton on the fourth day of his acquaintance with Mr. Shanks. "This is as it should be—a fair and honest ambition. Your object is fashion and good company—also a most laudable desire. But you are not known, have never been at a public school, and have no high connections. Unfortunate! But, then, you have what is better, a great deal of money; nay, you say without limit. With such advantages over us fine gentlemen, as we call ourselves, I should be glad to see what you may not do, whether as to conduct or company—that is to say, provided you do not mind the expense."

Mr. Shanks assured his noble preceptor that expense was the last thing he *should* mind, and gave him cart-blanche as to directions how to conduct himself, which he promised implicitly to follow. This was precisely what the Honourable Mr. Merriton wished, and prepared himself accordingly.

"You see," said he, to his unsuspecting pupil, "acquaintances, especially of a certain sort, are not like *me*—they are not to be got for asking."

"I would do any thing," said Shanks.

"Would you give a cool hundred for a hunter that is well worth it?"

"Yes, and a great deal more, if well worth it, and it led, as I suppose you mean, to a becoming acquaintance."

"And you would pay down the money on the nail?"

"Yes! A draft on my father."

"Good!" said Merriton. "Then I will introduce you to a friend of mine, the Honourable Mr. Corbyn, son of Lord Corbyn. He is tired of the chase, and means to part with his hunter."

"How very obliging you are," cried Mr. Courtenay Waldegrave, "to condescend to all this; and for a person you scarcely know."

"Pray don't mention it; but come with me to Mr. Corbyn's rooms, and the bargain shall be struck, and you shall see the horse out directly."

"I don't want to see the horse," said the generous, confiding Shanks; "I am quite satisfied with your recommendation."

"You really ought to be noble yourself," observed Mr. Merriton, though with his tongue in his cheek, "for your conduct is noble;" and they adjourned to the Honourable Mr. Corbyn's rooms.

That gentleman was not a little surprised, perhaps disconcerted, at Merriton's forcing an acquaintance upon him from Queen's, though a gentleman commoner, and began to look blue at both his visitors; but when he learned their errand, he changed to something like civility; allowed that it was most handsome conduct, most gentlemanly, certainly, to take the horse upon trust, even without

seeing him ; but he assured Mr. Shanks he would not repent it ; pocketed the draft, and bowed him out of the room.

Mr. Courtenay Waldegrave, in ecstacy, informed his father of what he had done, observing that if the horse was not worth his keep, still it was a cheap purchase, considering that the friendship of one honourable was cemented, and of another acquired by it.

The blockhead, his father, approved highly of this conduct ; and half the purchase went to pay a debt from the Honourable Mr. Corbyn to the Honourable Mr. Merriton ; with only a little drawback to the former, when he debated how he was to receive the greeting of this most gentlemanly purchaser of horses, should he meet him in the streets.

This was so good a beginning by Mr. Merriton with his pupil, that he did not like to have done with him, especially as this was only a piece of profit, and he wished for a scene of humour for his next operation. It soon offered, and did honour to Mr. Merriton's genius.

Notwithstanding the expectations kindled by his honourable patron, and an unheard-of expense in, among other luxuries of the kind, a rose-water bidet, and a basin of Eau de Cologne for his barber to dip his fingers in when he shaved him, poor Shanks did not advance into good company as he had hoped. The truth is, Merriton could not carry his own point of hoaxing the *parvenu*, from the unwillingness of his friends to join in it ; not from any consideration for him, but lest it should necessarily lead to an intercourse which they could not, in decency, shake off. Merriton's love of sport, however, at last succeeded, *salvo honore*, of his dignified friends.

Having settled his plan with a few leaders, he engaged his *protégé* to give a great dinner. " We don't get on as we ought," said he to him one day, " and I think it is because we are not bold enough. The progress by attempts at mere cap acquaintance is slow and doubtful. What think you of giving a grand dinner to a dozen tufts at once ? Few will resist turtle and burgundy."

" I should have no objection," said the aspirant, " but I don't know them."

" Leave that to me," answered Merriton ; " I will prepare a list of the very best company, while you go to the Star and order the very best dinner that Adams can furnish ; all the luxuries in or out of season ; fruits and wines, such as may vie with Blenheim itself. But mind, you must be prepared for a large bill. Fifty, at least."

" I should not mind that," returned our *parvenu*, " if you are sure it will secure the company you propose."

" I have already settled it with them," replied Merriton.

And so he had—and in a way which will scarcely be credited, except by those who know how far the love of hoaxing, and parti-

cularly of hoaxing an upstart who looks beyond his place, will carry young men of quality. In fact, those to whom Merriton opened his design said they had no objection to make Shanks give a dinner to cost fifty pounds, and to eat part of it too, if it could be so contrived as not to give him a claim upon their acquaintance afterwards—which they did not feel to be possible after they had sat at his own table with him.

To this difficulty the genius of Merriton supplied a remedy, and he promised that Shanks should not sit down with them, nor even see them, provided they would fairly attend.

Having obtained this promise from fourteen or fifteen of them, he thus set to work with his victim.

“ You see, my good Shanks,” said he, “ the only thing you want to gratify your praiseworthy ambition, and become one of us, is to get a name—to be talked of as one, not only indifferent to money, but superior to all forms and ceremonies, and perfectly independent of the society you wish to enter. It is your having courted them so much that has perhaps prevented you hitherto from succeeding. Now if you can shew this indifference after they have shewn themselves ready to banquet with you, it will be a triumph to you for ever, and only make them more desirous to cultivate you.”

“ The object seems excellent,” replied Shanks, “ but how is it to be brought about?”

“ Why thus,” said Merriton. “ Your dinner is to-morrow : the account of it, its luxuries, and expense of all kinds, together with a list of the company, all their titles set forth, is already preparing for the Oxford paper. Four tufts, and ten silk gowns, seven of them honourables, all printed by name. Now what if you should coolly mount your fine hunter in the morning, and join the duke¹ (it is one of his days, you know); then, just about dinner-time, let me have a note from you, telling me *carelessly* (as if you did not value either your fine dinner, or fine company, a rush), that the sport would probably detain you so long, that you are sorry you will not be able to attend; but you must request me to do the honours for you, and not to spare the champagne; and conclude by hoping that you will not be missed, *et cetera, et cetera*. Don’t you think this would shew an admirable *nonchalance*, and put you not only upon an equality, but greatly above the guests who are supposed to do you such honour, but for whom, while you feed them nobly, you thus shew such a dignified indifference?”

“ I really think it an admirable plan,” said Courtenay Waldegrave.

“ All this, too, you will remember,” added Merriton, “ will be in the Oxford papers, with the account of the dinner, and upon my word, with such a paragraph as may be made of it, your name will be up for ever.”

¹ Duke of Beaufort.

Mr. Shanks was, it seems, completely beguiled by this flattering proposal of the traitor Merriton, and fell at once into the snare. The guests assembled; the dinner was superb; the note was brought; Merriton took the chair amid roars of laughter from his brother hoaxers, and the evening passed off with the utmost conviviality, said the Oxford paper, though, to the regret of the noble visitors, without the presence of the master of the feast.

But though this devotee of a foolish ambition thus lost a magnificent dinner, for which he was to pay, while others ate it, he was not allowed to reap the reward of his folly. Sallying forth the next day to take possession of his honours, and looking right and left for his new acquaintances, to his dismay, as well as astonishment, none of them would recognise him. Some cut him dead; some crossed the street the moment they saw him; and the most favourable just jerked their chins, said a short yes! to his remark that it was a fine day, and hastily passed on.

He was in amaze, and betook himself to his counsellor for explanation, who assured him he could not account for it, for all thought the dinner exquisite; but he could not help perceiving, he said, that they shewed symptoms of jealousy, nay perhaps, were a little angry at being so cavalierly treated. "This, however, my good friend," added Merriton, "makes for you, and proves what I said it would—your superiority to them all."

This entirely satisfied Mr. Shanks for a time; till by degrees, the continued slights of his noble friends, and the titter of those of his own rank wherever he appeared, to say nothing of the clear exposure of the trick by his tutor, Fothergill, convinced him of the truth.

He debated at first whether he should not call out Merriton, who got immortal honour among all ranks for the ingenious hoax; but of this he thought better, and the only result was, that Merriton himself avoided him, for fear, as he said, of consequences; in truth, to use his own language, having done with the vulgar dog.

The effect of all this was, that Mr. Shanks removed from Oxford sooner than he would have done, and did what he could to hush up the story. Nevertheless, the old leaven continued to poison him; indeed how could it be otherwise, with such a father? Accordingly, he sought his idol in every place and under every form, with more or less success; though often he egregiously failed. Thus, it was whispered that on the race-course at Epsom he once made up to a youthful marquess, whose ruling passion was the turf, which, while in operation, levels all distinctions, and who so far relented as to enter into a bet with him of 300*l.* on a favourite horse. Shanks expected, nay hoped, to lose; but for the sake of so cheap a purchase of the acquaintance of a duke's son, accepted the bet, and to his astonishment, as well as disappointment, won. He was gratified,

however, to find that the marquess was in no condition to pay him except by offering his note, which was most gladly accepted.

What was his horror to find, notwithstanding, that, when off the course, the young lord was stiffer than ever towards him, and stoutly refused all familiarity, or even acquaintance; passing him in the streets, though he knew he had his note in his pocket.

A great stroke of policy, however, remained. Having heard that the marquess had bitterly lamented his having come under such obligation to one of a doubtful degree, he resolved to take a noble revenge, which he thought would play his own game at the same time. He enclosed the note cancelled to his noble debtor, calling it a trifle in comparison with the pleasure he had in being of service to him.

The marquess was puzzled, and, from necessity, was beginning to hesitate, when he was saved by the duke, his father; who, hearing of the transaction, and quite as exclusive as his son, paid the money, and my lord marquess continued, as before, to decline all knowledge of the unfortunate Courtenay Waldegrave.

“This,” said Fothergill, who gave me all these details, rubbing his hands when he related the story, “makes an excellent niche in my book of human nature.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LORD ALBANY OFFERS TO BERTHA, AND IS REFUSED—ITS EFFECT ON HER BROTHER.

Why do you look so startingly and rash?

SHAKSPEARE.—*Othello*.

THE reader, probably, will not be displeased if I leave the didactic Fothergill for a while, for something more stirring than what may be thought the dry maxims of life upon which I have been dilating.

Very soon after the conference last recorded, upon the necessity of forgetting there was such a family in existence as that of Foljambe Park, I was myself sufficiently stirred both in mind and heart, by receiving a letter from the very spot. The post-mark made me start not a little, and the hand-writing of Granville still more. To think how my fingers and whole frame trembled as I broke, or rather tore open the seal, with ten thousand guesses and self-questions on what could be the subject, or why he should write at all! They, in fact, retarded the operation, anxious as I was to perform it.

A good, honest, unrefined plodder would have opened the letter in half the time.

Well, not to afflict my reader with the same gratuitous anxiety, I have to acquaint him, that Granville told me little or nothing, but that he should soon be at Oxford. "Not worth his while," said I, throwing the letter on the table with something like spleen, "to take and give so much trouble for such a piece of intelligence;" and I own I walked about disgusted with it the whole day.

Nevertheless, for that and several days after I had no eyes or ears but for the coaches that almost hourly arrived in the town, particularly those from the north; and not a little of my spare time was given to coursing up and down the High-street, to and from All Souls, the College of this interesting Granville.

He came at last, and by my too great agitation at seeing him again, coupled with too studious an avoidance of any thing like curiosity about the place he came from, he detected how it was with me in a moment. Had it been better disguised, however, it would all have been at once laid bare, by the manner in which I received the news he very soon told me.

He had begun by probing me, being almost angry, he said, at my pretended apathy, yet affecting to think me thoroughly cured.

"You have nothing then to ask me," said he, "about those I came from?"

"Nothing."

"Nor care for any intelligence concerning them?"

"Not much."

"Very good. What if I should tell you of most important changes, both as to brother and sister?"

"Changes!"

"Yes; no less than a treaty for a double marriage."

This overset all my equanimity.

"For God's sake, Granville," I cried, "spare me. I at least am not changed. I acknowledge my hypocrisy, and am properly punished. Sir Harry then has succeeded, and I again say I am glad; but what of Foljambe?"

At this my friend began to sympathize with me. He changed his air and tone, and wishing I was really the philosopher I had appeared, told me a tale of wonder: that almost immediately after Sir Harry had taken his leave, Lord Albany and his sister, Lady Charlotte, had visited Foljambe Park, where, though they came but for a fortnight, they had staid the whole Autumn; the assigned cause, Lord Albany's love of field sports (there enjoyed in perfection) and Lady Charlotte's sudden friendship and admiration for Bertha.

The admiration, however, was by no means confined to her ladyship, but largely shared by my lord, whose love for sports out of doors soon contracted itself to a love of another kind within. In short, he abandoned the chase to become a most warm and assiduous suitor to Bertha. This example was followed in every point

by Foljambe, whose former flirtations with Lady Charlotte had grown into sober seriousness, and Granville had left him an accepted lover.

“And Lord Albany?”

“Expected to be so.”

“Expected?”

“Yes; favoured and urged on in his pursuit by Foljambe; and though not approved by her father, at least not rejected by him, or yet by Bertha herself.”

“Well,” said I, “God bless her! and bless them all!” and I assumed a tone of decision, which rather surprised my informant.

“And yet,” continued I, “for her own sake, I would rather——”

“What?”

“That she had chosen Sir Harry than Lord Albany.”

“And I, too,” observed Granville. “He was more suited to her. The marquess’s love is more for her beauty; and so I believe she feels it; but the decisions of even the best of women are not always comprehensible; though a wish to be a marchioness may have influence with the best.”

“Depend upon it,” said I, with a courage inspired by my genuine persuasions of her disinterestedness, “that consideration will never be an influencing cause for any decision of Bertha’s. Lord Albany’s are all brute merits; robust accomplishments, overbearing manners, athletic nerves, bodily energies; in short, they are all ‘of the earth, earthy.’ Bertha is truly feminine; cultivated in mind, as elegant in person; playful and arch, yet mild and dignified; full of modesty—full of sweetness; a blooming rose, a graceful myrtle! Such union is not, nor it cannot come to good:—

‘But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.’”

Here I confess my firmness gave way; my bravery failed; I felt all the bitterness of pent-up grief forced at last to vent itself in action, and though heartily ashamed, with sighs, and a faltering voice, I confessed all my weakness—all my dismay.

My condition affected Granville. “I had hoped,” said he, “that your assurances of recovery had been better founded, particularly after the impressions you said had been made upon you by the sage Fothergill.”

“I will yet,” replied I, “rise superior to this weakness; but ‘who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious, loyal and neutral, in a moment?’ I only wish that you had brought me word that the event was over; for it is easier to bear a positive evil than uncertainty. Yet you say the fact is certain.”

To my surprise, Granville paused at this; nay, hesitated and looked uneasy.

“I fear,” said he, “I was not quite so correct as I ought to have

been, but was misled by the firm countenance you shewed, to state a thing as certain, which was only, as I believe I expressed it, expected."

"But there is no doubt," cried I—"which is the same thing."

"Why, as to that, also," answered he, "I ought not perhaps to pledge myself; though from Foljambe's assurances, and Bertha's civilities to the marquess——"

"Civilities!" exclaimed I; "Gracious heaven! So cold a return for love! And will she go to the altar with civilities—and will he accept them?" and I own I felt disdainful.

"Come," said Granville, "this misunderstanding, the consequence of my blunders, need not be. Bertha will never give her hand without her heart; nor could I mean to say so; all that I did mean was, that being the avowed object of the marquess's attentions, she had not withdrawn from them."

"How could she withdraw," said I, gaining courage, "while he was in the house? and from your account, the offer has not yet been made."

"Not to herself, though sufficiently announced as intended; at least so I have been assured by her brother, his bosom friend."

"His wish," answered I, "was probably father of the thought, and, after all, you may be mistaken. Bertha and Albany were never made for one another."

"That may be a flattering unction which I would not wish you to encourage."

"Hear me, Granville," said I. "Whatever unction it may be, be assured it is on her account, not on my own. To pretend, or hope ever to be able to pretend, to this young lady, is not within a possibility in my own mind; and if I cannot conquer my madness, I must submit to be conquered by it, and allow it to prey upon me as it lists. But, without reference to myself, I may yet be permitted to rejoice if she escape from a man not worthy of her. Such, with all my inferiority of condition, I am bold enough to pronounce of Lord Albany, in every thing but his coronet."

"I honour you, my good fellow, for this," replied Granville, "as well as for every other trait of character you have shewn throughout this unfortunate acquaintance. Would that you could renounce your feelings."

"I say not so," replied I, "for I am very well satisfied with them. They do not injure me, and at least injure nobody else. Subdued and regulated as they are, I believe they even do me good; for they keep me out of mischief, and prevent me from loving any one of my own degree, whom I might ruin, and be ruined myself by marrying."

Granville smiled at this sally, and I left him, as usual, to meditate in solitude upon the critical information he had communicated.

I was in truth sincere in my last observation. My conviction of

the total hopelessness of my passion for Bertha had got such entire possession of me, that it became, as I have said before, part of my mind, and gave me no disturbance ; while, on the other hand, to think of her in all the sweet array of her attractions, purified my heart, as well as warmed my imagination. The thought of her was my favourite companion, yet interfered with nothing else ; it interrupted neither business nor duty, while it elevated and refined the pleasure I took in both. Possibly, I thought, should Lord Albany succeed, though it might go far to cure me, it might not render me half so happy, for it would lower my opinion of Bertha.

From this danger, however, I was soon relieved ; for when I again saw Granville, which was after an absence of a week from Oxford, and communicated this sentiment of mine, while he acknowledged its refinement, and what he called its romance, he said, “ If it be really so, I am glad to be able to relieve you from the danger of being cured, by what you would hold to be so derogatory to your mistress as marrying a marquess and fifteen thousand a-year ; for the post has just put me in a condition to tell you she has refused Lord Albany ;—though in the sparkle of your countenance I know not whether to read joy at her not sinking in your estimation, or at your own hopes not being extinguished.”

I assured him that in this last supposition he did me wrong, and that my joy, which I did not disguise, solely arose from the proof he had given that I was right in my estimation of her.

“ I believe you,” said he, heartily shaking my hand ; then taking out a letter, he communicated the details of his interesting news.

The letter was from Mr. Hastings, for it was much beneath Foljambe to communicate what he said so degraded his sister.

“ You know, my good nephew,” said Mr. Hastings, “ that I have never countenanced this affair, though I could not myself so affront a man of Lord Albany’s quality, by telling him to desist, or urging any objection on my own part as a father ; and knowing full well that Bertha herself would not be favourable, I thought it best to leave it entirely to her. The result is, as I foresaw, that she has declined his proposal. The coolness this has produced with the marquess would be nothing, but I am sorry to add, the ire of my son against his sister is unbearable.”

Mr. Hastings then went on to say that it was still stronger against her than when she declined the addresses of Sir Harry, and he did not, it seems, conceal from his father, any more than Bertha herself, his disgust at her conduct. She was a poor, mean-spirited wretch, unworthy her name and station, and might, to use his own expression, go to the devil her own way. As for her principal objections—the youth of them both—which was stated, he said, as a mere blind—or the incompatibility of their dispositions and habits—he did not believe a word of them, and condemned her as an art-

ful hypocrite. He only, however, touched so far upon what he had urged in the affair of Sir Harry, in regard to her thoughts of another, as to say he would rather see her in her grave, or send me to mine, than such a thing should be.

“How to meet these bursts of feeling, or how treat these threats,” said Mr. Hastings, “I know not; but I fear danger in them to some one or other, from his unreflecting and headlong violence. I am quite sure that Mr. Clifford deserves no part of his wrath, and so I am positively assured by Bertha herself. I own I am disappointed, as well as Lord Albany; and as I have many reasons for not wishing that she should be addressed by any one at present, I own I am glad of her delusion, and cannot with any justice go to the extremes to which I am urged by this headstrong boy. Pray heaven that his own settlement with Lady Charlotte, which still proceeds, may in the end reclaim him. But the worst is, that he has quarrelled with his intended brother-in-law, or rather the brother-in-law with him. The marquess accuses him of having misrepresented Bertha’s feelings towards him, saying he should not otherwise have *condescended* to pursue her as he did; and both are too proud to make up the difference which this language has occasioned. Indeed I am by no means sure that all is yet ended between these hot young men; nor are things likely to be mended by the marquess now doing all in his power to break the match between his sister and his chosen college friend. In short, my whole domestic prospect is overcast, and I wish to heaven you had not left us, for much I want you.”

Such was the important letter which Granville placed in my hands, by way, as he called it, of *restoring* Bertha to my esteem. Heaven knows how little that was needed.

But the details it contained besides were by no means indifferent, or of an ordinary complexion. My first source of anxiety was as to the causes of this conduct in Bertha. She had now, a second time within a few months, refused offers, high as was her own lot, equal to it in every respect; in the last, as to worldly advantages, even its superior. What could have induced such indifference, persevered in with such firmness, though left free by her father, and against all the wishes of her brother, in a girl of her age, who in general looks to settlement in marriage as the great and sole object of life? Was she cold? severe in temper? unsociable? selfish? insensible? Ah no! the reverse of all these. What was it then? For the life of me I could not find out.

In regard to the other parties, I was still less easy. The hints thrown out that all was not ended between two such fiery spirits, hot with youth, “jealous and quick in quarrel,” with each a sense of injury, and, what is worse, of affront, occasioned much alarm to the good-natured Granville, and, I will own, some to me.

What I had known of Foljambe gave me no confidence in his

discretion, his coolness, or his placability, particularly if his pride was wounded. If so, the very rank and consideration of the marquess would go to swell all his feelings, so as to make them ungovernable.

On the other hand, what I had heard of the overbearing haughtiness of the marquess himself, excited as it might be, if only by mortified vanity, to say nothing of love, gave one no prospect of that mutual forbearance which, in the outset, by sparing many a quarrel, has saved many a life.

Granville was anxiously struck with fears for the event, and talked of returning instantly to the Park, according to the wish expressed by his relative ; an intention in which he was by no means discouraged by me. In fact, he set off, with a promise to let me know the termination of the affair, fortunate or unfortunate.

My own anxiety in the interval may be imagined, and Folhergill, from whom I could conceal nothing, was almost as anxious as myself.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MARQUESS AND FOLJAMBE, FROM FRIENDS, BECOME IRRECONCILABLE ENEMIES,
AND ENGAGE IN A DEADLY QUARREL.

High-stomach'd are they both, and full of ire.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Richard II.*

IT was four days after Granville's departure before I heard from him, and when I heard, it was to make me far more unhappy. The exasperated friends, changed into determined enemies, had met, and the consequences were disastrous to them both. Lord Albany was as furious with his sister for refusing to break with Hastings, as Hastings was with his, for refusing to accept Lord Albany. This, and the affront put upon the family by the language of the marquess, that he would not have *condescended* to pursue Bertha had he not been encouraged, inflamed irritation to its height.

To do Foljambe justice, he endeavoured first to obtain some satisfactory explanation of the phrase,—which was proudly refused ; and a hint was then dropt of the necessary consequence, which was only prevented, Foljambe said, by the circumstance that the marquess was still the guest of Mr. Hastings. Albany instantly ordered his carriage, and whispered Foljambe, that he would wait for him at York, where the impediment he had hinted might at once be removed.

It may be supposed that Foljambe soon followed, but first placed Granville in a most distressing situation, by opening the affair to him, and insisting, that as a relation as well as a friend, it con-

cerned himself in vindicating the honour of the family, he should accompany him as his second.

Granville at first refused, and was for communicating the matter to his father; but upon second thought, feeling convinced that the meeting could not be prevented, and hoping he might be able to mitigate the extremities of passion by good offices, he resolved to comply, and proceeded with Foljambe to York. There they found the marquess, who had already provided himself with a friend, in an old acquaintance, Colonel Sackville, whom he met in the subscription-room, and who could not refuse a man of his quality, soliciting his support in an affair of honour.

Granville did all he could with this gentleman to influence him to persuade Lord Albany to do common justice to the affronted party; and, to do justice to Colonel Sackville, he did not scruple to tell Lord Albany he thought him in the wrong. But, that misguided person said it was too late; and all that was left for the seconds was to see fair play. This was the more necessary, from the exasperation of the parties, which was little short of madness. They went out immediately, and the usual distance being settled, the principals (fatally for themselves, both admirable shots) fired at the same moment, and both fell.

The subsequent consternation may be supposed. So violent had been the haste of these once loving friend to destroy one another, that no surgeon had been provided, and had not the valets of each been in attendance, there might have been difficulty in removing them when fallen; but through these servants carriages were quickly procured. The seconds, unmindful of their own safety, had remained to give all the assistance they could till more aid arrived, and at length these ungovernable young men were conveyed to the same hotel, and put to bed, insensible, half-dead from loss of blood, and barely still alive.

Two surgeons were immediately in attendance, whose first care was to restore animation, which was with difficulty effected. The wounds were then probed, and both pronounced most dangerous, if not hopeless. The marquess's ball was indeed extracted from the breast, where it had entered, but that of Foljambe baffled all their attempts. When Granville wrote, the marquess's wound was pronounced not altogether without hope, but Foljambe's desperate: both seconds had, therefore, left the city, together with the two servants. Mr. Hastings had come to York, to attend his son, and Bertha, deluged in grief, had been left at the Park, the child of woe, reproaching herself as the murderess of her brother. Good God! "what a piece of work is man!" left in peace, "how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties; in action how like an angel!" once enshafed, how instantly overthrown! transformed by rage, unmoulding reason's mintages,

‘ Into the inglorious likeness of a beast.’

The effect of this news upon me may be conceived. My regard for Foljambe, never thoroughly extinguished, seemed to revive with his threatened fate. I wished to go to York to attend his bedside ; I thought I could comfort him. Alas ! I did not recollect that he could derive comfort from any one sooner than me ; that in his mad passion, he in some measure might look upon me as the cause of his catastrophe, and that though dying he might spurn me from him.

I thought still more of the lovely sufferer at the Park. Oh ! had my lot permitted me to have shared and assuaged her sorrows ! but I could do nothing. I was powerless, hopeless, and therefore more miserable.

I sought Fothergill, but found no comfort in him. He was in his dryest and stiffest vein, and scarcely, except as a Christian, commiserated these unhappy youths, as I called them.

“ Unhappy ! ” cried he, sternly. “ Who made them so ? Not their Creator, whom they have braved, but themselves. Did they not court, nay, force on their fate, not as many honourable madmen do, for honour’s sake, but from mere unbridled, ruffian passion ? Do they even now repent ? ”

“ Surely, Sir,” said I, “ we ought to think they do ; at least, it is uncharitable without proof to suppose they do not.”

“ When the proof comes,” he replied, “ I will believe it, and pity them ; meantime, pray God to forgive them, which they probably do not do by one another.”

“ Indeed, Sir,” said I, “ this is too shocking.”

“ You think so,” answered he, “ and it may appear so to your inexperience. But they are both the children of pride, and never did I know a really proud man but thought himself too good to submit to forgiveness, whatever his wrong.

‘ Think’st thou I mean to live ? To be forgiven ? ’

was the insolent taunt of Calista to her own father, spurning at penitence ; and Rowe knew human nature when he put it in her mouth.

“ What was it but pride that sunk the evil one himself to perdition, and made him ‘ as far from begging ’ as he thought the God he had offended was ‘ from granting peace ? ’ Hence the fool who thought in his heart there was no God, was less guilty than the proud man who acknowledges, only to defy him. For the fool was only a fool, and, unhappily for himself ignorant of God. The proud man admits his existence, but cares not for him.

“ I know not,” continued Fothergill, “ if you are as fond of Spencer as you are of Shakspeare ; if you are, perhaps you may

remember that terrible description of the house of pride, and the procession of its queen, so poetic and so revolting?"

I told him I knew it not.

"Then read it," said he, "when you go home, and mark the beings that draw and drive her chariot. They are all the worst vices—idleness, gluttony, lechery, avarice, envy, and wrath. These are her cattle, and the driver Satan'. Fit equipage, you will say, for pride."

I shuddered at the description, and not less when he went on—

"The proud man's heart is always hard; but these men, in addition to pride, were 'minions of splendour,' and what do such minions ever know of humanity? How can they pray, who know not their Maker? Plunged in reckless, as well as endless dissipation, they have not God in all their thoughts. Self—absorbing self—is their sole Deity. To think of having sinned, still more of asking pardon for sin, is as strange and novel to them as it would be degrading. No! these insolent men, who trampled upon every thing and everybody about them, and would not humble themselves to one another though death was at their door, will never humble themselves before a God, their duty to whom, if they ever knew it, they have wilfully renounced."

He said this with a sternness which shewed how sincere he was in the sentiment, and in a manner so beyond his wont, that I confess I was awed, and did not reply. What struck me was, that in other colleges, and even in the streets (not the same language indeed, but), the same sort of opinion was expressed by the gownsmen at large, among whom the news had by this time spread.

Neither Albany nor Hastings had borne their faculties meekly, and their disdain of all below them had made them not merely unpopular, but hated; a circumstance in which, in the true spirit of Renowners, far from regretting it, they had seemed to glory. I heard, therefore, no pitying voice at the catastrophe; on the contrary, all pity was denied to those who, it was said, had never shewn it to others.

Their fall was almost talked of with a satisfaction which made me shudder, and had they known it, would have been deplored by themselves. For men who are supported by vanity, even upon a scaffold, lose at least the courage which vanity inspires when deprived of applause. How much more if they sink detested!

The whole impressed me with feelings as to human nature which I never knew before.

Yet, slighted as they were, these youths were struck down in the flower of their age; both of them noble, accomplished, talented, and seemingly made for better things.

* *Faery Queen*. B. I, Cant. 4.

How such advantages could be so thrown away, and of what little consequence were the highest gifts of fortune without personal merit, was a problem I could scarcely solve; yet the conviction of it sank deeper with me every hour.

The effect was indelible, and the adventitious superiorities of condition among men, once so lamented by me, now dwindled to nothing.

Fothergill saw this, and asked whether, if even the two young men recovered, I would exchange situations with either? "Had they been struck in battle," said he, "how different their fate! how honourably would they be mourned! But to fall by each other's hands! converted in an hour from apparent, though evidently hollow friends, into savage enemies, and all from ungovernable rage and empty vanity!"

"Of what avail are all their dazzling advantages? The poorest peasant, the lowest artisan, if honest and simple in mind, is far above them in estimation, even in this world; what must it be in the next?"

It was impossible not to assent to the truth of these sentiments; yet I was so struck by his earnestness, and seeming hostility to the unfortunate objects of his attack, that I could not help asking him whether they did not engage more of his interest, from their very faultiness, and whether he would not pray for them?"

"I would," said he, "as I would, and do, for Jews, Turks, and Infidels, but with full as little hope."

Fothergill was so emphatic in his tone when he uttered this, that I desisted from the subject. In fact, although paying deferential respect to the real ornaments of the aristocracy, which he said were more numerous in proportion than in other divisions of society, it is not easy to describe the compound of aversion and contempt with which he regarded what he called the trifling, or vulgar great, who had nothing intrinsic in their natures or manners to make them valuable.

"Pride and emptiness," said he, "in whatever rank, but more especially in the upper, I always consider as objects of ridicule, but accompanied, as here, with deadly sin, of detestation."

All this was true, but my heart was full of what had happened. It occupied me all night, and I longed for the early morning to bring another post, whatever intelligence might be brought along with it.

The morning came, and brought nothing; from which I knew not what to augur, and was only the more distressed from suspense. The next day announced that the hope for Lord Albany continued, but that the fear for Hastings was not diminished; on the contrary, that the torture sustained by the still vain endeavour to extract the ball, by producing fever, made every thing worse.

Bertha had implored to be allowed to attend her sinking brother, which, with an extremity of passion, shocking to every one, he had precipitately refused.

What a dreadful lesson of the mischiefs of self-indulged passion!

Unable to bear the cruel uncertainties arising from distance from the mournful scene, I at length obtained a reluctant consent from Fothergill to proceed to York.

“To be repulsed with anger or contempt, like his poor sister,” said my tutor. “Have I not told you what a proud man is? And does not this shew more than any thing how proud he is? Go. Console him if you can, and try to make him ‘think of Heaven’s bliss;’ but depend upon it, though he die, he will ‘make no sign.’”

I was shocked with this melancholy thought; yet proceeded to York with I know not what plan for my conduct, only I thought I might relieve my o’erfraught heart if I could but see Hastings before he died, and receive from him the last embrace of friendship.

On my arrival I flew to the hotel where he lay, but was refused all access—not by him, who knew nothing of the visit, but by the surgeon whom I saw, and who told me there was not a hope of the case.

The senior Mr. Hastings, hearing I was there, occasioned me some distress by coming into the room where I was, for I dreaded his cold formality, perhaps now mixed with disdain and displeasure.

Ah! with what little reason did I accuse him! The high man of quality was now bowed to the earth with a woe to have been exempt from which he would have changed situations with me. For he had been bitterly convinced, by this visitation, that in the eye of Heaven he was no more than the lowest of his fellow-men, and that the proudest can have little cause for pride in a lot of misery common to all.

Man of quality as he was, he was now a man of sorrows, and the one seemed lost in the other. To my astonishment, therefore, after the expectation I had formed, he accosted me not merely with politeness, but soft complacency—nay, with tenderness; for his pride was scourged and his heart wrung; and when I told him I had always loved his son, so that I could not bear remaining so far from him, though I might not be able to do him any service, the old man’s eyes filled with tears, and he grasped my hand with emotion when he said, “And yet, my good young man, my poor son made but an ill return, I fear, for your attachment; but I trust you will forgive him, for he has dearly paid for that, and all his other deficiencies.”

He could go no further, and I was too affected to reply. He then made me sit down by him, but placing his finger on his lips, told me we must not talk, for Charles lay in the next room, and if there was a spark of hope, it could only be though the most absolute

quiet. In fact, he had been only kept alive up to this time by laudanum.

Never before had I been so affected by another person's distress; for, though evidently acute, there was now a resignation and calm about Mr. Hastings that seemed to throw a dignity around his sorrow which only made it more impressive. At length he dismissed me, whispering me to come again, though despairing of my ever seeing his son alive.

It may be supposed that I thought of Bertha, but, for obvious reasons, I dared not mention her name; and so ended this first visit.

The second (the next day morning) was still more overwhelming, for the crisis approached, and called still more for exertion. One of the surgeons and Mr. Hastings had watched all night, to observe the least possible change for good or for bad; the former being absolutely necessary to enable them once more to attempt to extract the ball, upon which the only chance of life depended. There was no such change; and if there had been, probably it would have been without avail, for the sinking patient, when able to speak, only shewed himself so, by begging that no more attempts might be made, and that he might be allowed to die in peace.

The weeping father, assured by the surgeon that he would sink at once under such an attempt, promised that he should suffer no more, and waited the event with a submission which engaged all my reverence. He stirred not from the bed-side, but, with the sufferer's hand in his, watched the parting spirit.

In this crisis a message of inquiry was delivered from Lord Albany, and Mr. Hastings with agony mentioned this, and Bertha's and my name, to him; but life was ebbing fast; nor was there strength left to ascertain whether he had any, or what feeling towards any of us, still less whether he thought "of heaven's bliss."

A momentary convulsion of doubtful import then seized his cheek, and he opened his eyes; but having fixed a vacant look upon his father, closed them again for ever!

The news of this, communicated to me by the surgeon at the door of the apartment, where I had passed two hours, changed the anxieties I had undergone into a stupor from which I was not easily recovered; and to my astonishment, when I awoke, I found myself on a couch in Mr. Hastings' sitting-room. He had retained all his self-possession; and on being informed of my condition, had even come out to see me, and gave orders for my being attended. How differently may we judge of persons from their deserts!

After coming to myself I was conveyed to my inn, and saw him not again that day; but Mr. Sandford, the surgeon, by his desire, came to see me in the evening. Recovered from the attack, and encouraged by Mr. Sandford's assiduity, I asked him as a favour to tell me any particulars he knew of poor Foljambe's demeanour or

conversation during his sufferings, particularly as to any religious impressions he might have shewn; for I own Fothergill's presages had never quitted me, and they had shocked me so much, not more on Foljambe's account than on that of human nature at large, that I was anxious and hopeful that they should be disproved.

Sandford gave me no comfort; quite the contrary. When his father, whose whole conduct, he said, was admirable, intreated Foljambe to think of what might be impending, and ask and send forgiveness to his sister and Lord Albany, but still more to submit himself to, and ask pardon of heaven—all which he did with most pious earnestness—he could get no answer but a solemn demur to the proposal.

“What have I done,” said he, “to be forgiven by Bertha and Albany, who ought rather to ask forgiveness of me? and as to heaven, thwarted as I have been in every thing in this world, what can I expect in the next? Do not torment me, father, but let me die in quiet.”

I own this account overwhelmed me, and I thought with distress of Fothergill's prediction.

With regard to the other proud man (Lord Albany), on the strength of the message of inquiry sent by him to Foljambe, I had some hope of him, and asked Mr. Sandford whether any thing like contrition or forgiveness had been expressed on his part. Sandford, who had been an army surgeon, said, that could hardly be expected, and in fact had not probably been the motive. That Lord Albany should be anxious that his antagonist should not die, was natural on more accounts than one: “but we are to recollect,” said Sandford, “that Mr. Hastings was the challenger, and received the fortune of war. Albany, moreover, is himself by no means safe; his life even now hangs upon a thread; fever would kill him directly.”

All this did not make me happier; and under such feelings I felt all the desolation of being left alone for the night, friendless, and seemingly abandoned in a strange land, the scene of so much misery.

The next morning I was consoled by learning that Granville had returned. Both he and Colonel Sackville had changed their intentions of retiring. As there was no witness to the duel but themselves and the valets, who had gone out of the way, nothing could be brought home to them; and their withdrawal, which would be construed into absconding, could only excite suspicion; they therefore both returned.

Granville's feelings may be conceived. He was alive to the dreadful blow the family had sustained, made worse by the total absence of a sufficient cause for the unhappy measure that had occasioned it. On this, grieved as he was, he did not conceal his opinion, or that it had taken its rise solely from the headlong violence and

overbearing pride of the sufferer. His removal, however, he said, might perhaps after all be better for himself, as well as those who now wept him—so dangerous and so uncertain are the ways of the proud and self-willed.

Upon this I told him how little Foljambe had been pitied at Oxford ; when he observed, it was to be expected, and, could he have known it, it would have been his severest mortification.

I had, however, other matter to communicate, in the changed, and, to me, surprising behaviour of Mr. Hastings.

“ Why,” said Granville, when I mentioned it, “ though one of the proudest as to birth and all aristocratic prejudices, his pride was always, and sometimes successfully, encountered by his piety ; for as far as sentiment and a sense of dependence upon heaven go, he is most sincerely and naturally pious ; so that his prejudices, which are those merely of education, are often, even in ordinary matters, at variance with his religious feelings, which are those of the heart. At the present moment, the latter have obtained complete ascendancy ; for he thinks he is deservedly under the hand of Heaven, chastising him for his good. Indeed, I have often known him presage that his pride would be one day severely visited by providence ; and he supposes the blow he has deserved by way of punishment is now struck. Hence his change from loftiness to humility and resignation, and his softness to you.

“ It would be now, indeed, no time to shew pride, if he had it even in a greater degree ; but his pride, at any rate, is very different from poor Foljambe’s, which arose out of an impetuous and even tyrannous disposition, unchecked by religion, and wholly different from that of his father who is a just man. The one was an imperious disdain of every thing that did not yield to him ; the other, the innocuous prejudices of a good-natured, well-born gentleman, merely conscious and fond of a long pedigree.”

I own I had a secret pleasure in hearing these nice distinctions in the pride of father and son, which never struck me before, but which, thus pointed out, seemed no more than just. Yet even this, I thought, did not account for the unusual kindness of manner shewn by Mr. Hastings, and I expressed to Granville my wonder how it arose.

“ Clearly,” said he, “ from the justice I have mentioned as a part of his character. He thought, what was true, that you had been ill-treated by his son, at whose change towards you, without any cause, he was highly disgusted. Bertha, too, though I am more than ever afraid to mention her to you, shared this feeling, and both paid due respect to your ancient descent, to which Mr. Hastings himself always attached no small importance.”

At the name of Bertha I started, but could not help asking Granville why he was more than ever afraid of mentioning her?

“Why, see you not,” said he, “that her position is greatly changed by what has happened, and that she is no longer in the ordinary condition of a young woman with a fixed portion, but has become a great heiress?”

The thought struck me profoundly, and the more from its having never occurred to me before.

“To be sure,” continued Granville, “West-India property, which forms the bulk of their fortune, is uncertain, and there are sometimes strange revolutions among these plantation grandees; nevertheless, the domain of Foljambe alone, though not considerable, would render her a far more weighty match than she was before. I speak in a worldly point of view.”

“Worldly, indeed,” said I, and I gave a sigh, not unobserved by Granville.

“I know,” said he, “what that sigh implies; and I agree with you in thinking that Bertha is such a fortune in herself, that he must be a worldly-minded wretch that could think of pelf when thinking of her. To seek fortune with her would be ‘gilding refined gold.’ Nevertheless, we must open our eyes, and confess that the sphere of her attraction is enlarged by this event. Your sigh, too, has also another meaning.”

I asked what?

“Why, I have by my expression set before you more than ever all that, in the view of the world, interposes between you and your ambition. But is not this the truth, and ought you not to be told it by a friend, if it does not occur to yourself? Can I shew myself this friend better than by setting before you the still greater necessity than ever of abandoning what, if pursued, will inevitably destroy you?”

CHAPTER XXX.

RESIGNATION AND DANGER OF MR. HASTINGS.—FIRMNESS OF HIS DAUGHTER.

Lear.—“To deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is,

Do not laugh at me,
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.”

Cordelia.—“I am, I am.”

SHAKSPEARE.—*King Lear.*

THE concluding observation of Granville, though no more than just and no more than what I should have made myself, was bitter to my feelings. I resolved, however, for the twentieth time, to take

his advice, and return immediately to Oxford, without trusting myself to seek another interview with Mr. Hastings.

This resolution, firm as it was, was overthrown in a moment, by that gentleman's sending a servant to beg I would call upon him. To refuse, I thought, would not only be ungrateful, but the height of incivility, and, in his situation, unfeeling and barbarous. I went, therefore, and with a hurried step. I found him collected and resigned, but his bodily feelings much worn. He had been exceedingly agitated by an inquest that had been held on his dead son, though, as there was no positive evidence either of the duel or the cause of quarrel, many of the distressing particulars were avoided : there was no manner of doubt that the death was occasioned by Lord Albany's hand ; yet, as Mr. Hastings was most scrupulous in refusing to prosecute, and even in withholding all information which he could keep back, the verdict was general, namely, death by a pistol shot, but by whom fired did not appear.

This being over, there remained the question of the funeral, which Granville had exerted his utmost to persuade Mr. Hastings to leave to him, and himself to retire to Foljambe. But the father asserted himself, and refused to be spared the melancholy task. He held it a duty, he said, which he owed to the God who had only properly struck him, to shew his resignation to His will, by bowing over the grave of the son who had been taken from him.

He had desired Granville to attend him in this last office ; and it was to ask me, as one who had shewn such attachment to the lost Foljambe (spite of ill usage) to join him in the same attention, that he had sent for me. " It will be a consolation to me," said the afflicted old man, " to shew how little I thought you deserved the unjust treatment you received ; and if such a supposition may be indulged, I please myself in thinking, that the unhappy boy himself may know and approve it."

I was greatly affected, and felt that what Granville had represented to me of the real piety of his uncle, was no more than true. It may be supposed that my return to Oxford was postponed.

I will not re-open the affliction I underwent at the ceremony, by touching upon its details further than to say, that the firmness and resignation, mingled with deep sorrow, shewn by this wounded father, commanded the admiration of all. His bearing, naturally so lofty, seemed indeed bowed to the earth, but in a manner still comparatively dignified, and evidently evincing, that he succumbed to a being who he felt, if He afflicted him, had done so in mercy. In short, he was an example of the resigned confidence of the Psalmist—" It is good for me to have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes. "

Nevertheless his misery was abundant, and at last alarming ; for, on his return to the hotel, he remained long on his couch, in a

fixed stupor, without uttering a word, though we all tried to obtain his notice, in order to divert him from himself.

Sandford watched for tears, and endeavoured to excite them, as the best chance of restoring him, by talking of his son, but in vain; his state continued unaltered, and Sandford began to be seriously uneasy. "If we can produce no vent for his grief," said he, "I will not answer for the consequences. It is a pity his daughter is not here, if indeed he could know her."

Granville caught at this, and asked, "Would you advise sending for her?"

"I would," said Sandford, "though whom to send to break the necessity for her presence, without oversetting her too, I know not. Has she no female relation with her?"

"None," returned Granville.

"Could you not undertake the mission yourself?"

"Willingly, if you will instruct me how and what to report."

"Then lose no time," concluded Sandford: "for this is a case of mind, and beyond my art."

In fine, horses were ordered, and, as it was but five miles, we hoped to see him in an hour, with the lovely being whose presence and attentions gave the only hope of recovering her father from the alarming syncope that seemed to have bound him in a chain of iron.

During the interval between Granville's departure and return, we were so much engaged in watching Mr. Hastings that I could hardly attend to my own feelings, occasioned by the expectation of the impending arrival. All I know was, that, between the thought of father and daughter, I was in a tremor of excitement.

Sandford had bled his patient, which seemed to have some effect, for he opened his eyes and breathed somewhat more freely, but still with scarce a sign of restored sense; and we earnestly watched the roll of every carriage we heard, in the hope of what alone, in the surgeon's opinion, would rouse his patient from his present dangerous state.

When the chaise did arrive, and Granville led in his interesting charge, my own senses seemed to stand in need of support. Never shall I forget, never cease to admire, the demeanour of this perfect young woman.

Having been fully instructed by Granville as to the case, and the necessity of exciting, if possible, the sensibilities of her father, in order to produce the return of his mind, she perfectly comprehended what was expected from her, and that her own self-possession must not give way. Distressed, therefore, but not overwhelmed, struggling with the uneasy feeling that she was acting under the observation of others, yet overcoming it for the sake of the person most dear to her, and to whom she owed all reverence, the energy as well as filial

piety of this excellent creature shone out in a manner to fill us all with admiration.

She trembled as she advanced to the couch where her parent lay, but instantly assumed the presence of mind of a nurse, applying all the stimulants given her for the purpose, with perfect collectedness, only interrupting the process at intervals with tender appeals to his notice, if he could hear them ; murmuring in tender accents, while her lips touched his cheek, " Do you not know me, father ? I am your own Bertha. Will you not wake for her sake ? " and then would tears fall fast, bedewing his face as well as her own.

These, together with the whisperings of her name into his ears, had an effect (a feeble one), but such as the remedies used had failed in producing. By slow (very slow) degrees, the fixed look of his eyes relaxed, and he began to sigh. The sigh affected Bertha, and she looked fearfully distressed ; nor is there perhaps a more heart-breaking thing to a devoted daughter than the sigh of deep-seated grief from the breast of a beloved parent. She began to be overcome by it, till Sandford assured her that it was the very best symptom that could be shewn of returning sense. This immediately cheered her, and she renewed her attentions, again whispering her name, and entreating her father to speak to her. Nor was the effort at last in vain ; it was indeed blessed ; for his deadened eye began to shew lustre as he fixed it upon her, and in a tremulous voice he asked, " Where am I ? I know not this room, or who is talking. Yet I should say it was Bertha, if Bertha were here. "

Bertha replied, with sobs of joy, " I am—I am, "—and fell upon his cheek.

It had its effect, for he asked, " Is it really my child ? " and by his fond caress he shewed that he knew her, and that his mind had returned.

Sandford now came forward in his directorial capacity ; he had prepared a stimulating cordial for his patient, which he gave to be administered by Bertha's hand ; observing, however, that she herself had been, and still was, a better cordial than all the art of medicine could supply, and that the very best thing he could now do was to leave her and her father together, if only for a few minutes. " The pulse, " said he, " is still low, but will soon be higher with such a nurse. It is quiet now that is most wanted. I will myself retire, but only into the next room, so that I shall be at hand. "

With this he left the room, and took Granville and me along with him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PIETY OF MR. HASTINGS, AND ITS IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES TO ME.

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek. It seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion, who, most rebel like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once.

Those happy smiles
That played on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes.

In brief, sorrow
Would be a rarity most beloved, if all
Could so become it.

SHAKSPEARE.—*King Lear*.

Thy sins are visited in this poor child.

King John.

Didst ever hear a man so penitent?

2 Henry VI.

DURING all this time I have said nothing of the feelings called up by the arrival of this amiable being to the aid of her sinking parent. That she was only more attractive than ever under such a character may be imagined. In truth, she so absorbed us all by the presentation it made us of female merit in perhaps the loveliest character it exhibits, filial tenderness and duty, that, keen as were my sensations on my own account, their interest sank to nothing, even with myself, in comparison with that of the scene I have described. For not even as a wife does a woman shew better, or perhaps so well, as when fulfilling the tender duties of love and reverence due to the author of her being. How does not such a picture enhance and heighten even the loveliest beauty!

Safely may I say that this was so with Bertha. The deep mourning she wore only the more set off the delicacy of her complexion; but joined to the sentiment inspired by her whole demeanour in this affecting scene, all I ever felt for her was augmented ten thousand fold.

I watched to observe whether she recognised me; but she was too completely absorbed by her father to give any sign of it. On our return to the room it was different.

We found Mr. Hastings much restored as to sense and animation, though greatly enfeebled as to strength. His daughter was on her knees before him, chafing his hands, which, however, ever and anon, he disengaged from hers, placing them upon her head, and blessing her. On our entrance she arose, and exhibited in her countenance such a mixture of joy and anxiety (though of anxiety re-

lieved), as would have been irresistible in the plainest female so employed ; what in her ?

With the self-possession which never abandoned her, she thanked Mr. Sandford for sending for her. " It would have broke my heart," said she, " had I been left in ignorance, and not have been allowed to come. But, thank God, he is quite well now."

Sandford smiled, and observed, " Not quite yet ; but will be, I trust : " and Mr. Hastings, having gathered strength, said, " How can I ever thank these friends enough ? Bertha must do it for me."

He then asked her if she had seen her old friend, (meaning me), adding, " He has been very good in coming so far for our sakes, and did not, I see, abandon me under this last visitation. You must thank him for me."

The frank girl immediately stretched out her hand, and said, in her sweetest accents, " O ! I do indeed thank Mr. De Clifford for more than this—his kindness to———"

But here a faltering voice, and tears, which indeed had never been thoroughly suppressed amid all her joy at having recovered her father, prevented further utterance. Words, however, were not necessary to create in me a bliss I had not for a long time known, not merely because I was allowed to press her offered hand, in token of the thanks which her father himself, to my surprise, quite as much as my pleasure, had commissioned her to express. What joy was in that moment !

But now, Mr. Sandford resuming the command, advised the patient's retiring to bed. " It is repose," said he, " after most sad agitation, that he chiefly wants, and if he can get sleep, to which I would add any mild sustenance he may fancy, he will do very well. I will look in at midnight to see that every thing is right, and meantime, request of you, my excellent young lady, neither to alarm nor exhaust yourself in watching. The paroxysm over, I have no fears for his bodily health. For mental comfort (the best of all), I can only recommend you to a higher Power."

Mr. Hastings was too weak to answer, but shewed by an inclination of his head, and a deep sigh, that he fully agreed with what Sandford had said ; and Bertha, on the latter taking leave, gave him a look of mournful gratitude ; and then, wishing Granville and me good night, the door closed upon what seemed to me all the interests I had in the world.

As Granville and I lodged in the same inn, we passed the evening together, and had much talk. " This sad event," said he, " mournful as it is, will perhaps eventually be better for my uncle's happiness. It was plain to me that poor Foljambe's irreclaimable violence of spirit would have ruined his father's peaceful habits of retired self-consequence. In this he had wrapt himself up for some years, and hence, seldom stirring from his domain, where he was

the deity of the place, 'sole monarch of all he surveyed,' he allowed the world to pass as it listed, provided it gave him no disturbance. He lived indeed in that easy negligence which, as Johnson says of Sir Roger de Coverley, solitary grandeur naturally generates. This, however, was not wholesome as a cure for his family pride, which grew upon him the more for living alone, and being free from the rivalry of upstarts, whom he could not bear. He preferred, indeed, a man who derived from the times of the Plantagenets, though with scarce bread to eat, to a *millionnaire* who sprang from a South Sea bubble. Hence, I verily believe," added Granville, "his condescensions to you ; so don't flatter yourself that it is your own individual merit that has obtained them. There is, however, another reason, quite as powerful, in his strong religious feeling, which, you must have observed, has actuated him throughout this severe trial."

"But how can that," asked I, interested by these observations, "influence his condescensions to me?"

"Why, see you not that his deep sense of Christian duty, always warring with his pride, perpetually fills him with remorse and humility ; and when this is the case, he considers it a bounden duty to take amends twenty-fold to all those whom he, or even his son, may have slighted, for what, unlike a real proud man, he considers a sin requiring punishment. That punishment he thinks has now deservedly fallen upon him by the death (made more miserable for the manner of it) of the only heir of his name, to whom, with all his faults, he was tenderly attached. He is alive to all his son's wrongs to you, the greater because of your fidelity to him ; and in his sincere submission to what he feels the justice of heaven, it consoles him in his grief to make up to you the kindness in which Foljambe was so deficient. In this, and only for the same reasons, I have no doubt he is seconded by his daughter ; and I tell you this to guard you from those self-flatteries which might otherwise, with all your fine resolutions, assail you."

"I thank you," said I (I am afraid, rather dryly), "for this caution ;" and I was not sorry that our retiring for the night put an end to the conversation.

When alone, I revolved with fearful interest all the incidents of this eventful day. Both the father and daughter became more than ever the objects, the one of my study, the other of my admiration. The religious resignation of Mr. Hastings, and the sweet filial piety, mixed with decision of conduct, in Bertha, occupied all my recollections as well as all my reasoning faculties, so that I could not rest. I was tossed in a sea of doubt as to what attentions Mr. Hastings might still permit himself to shew me, and if shewn, whether I ought to accept them. If I did, and particularly if I ever found myself again within the atmosphere of Foljambe Park, I felt I was

lost for ever; for this new position in which I had seen her, only made me more than ever the lover of goodness and of Bertha.

On the other hand, the intimations by Granville as to the effect of Mr. Hastings' religious feelings (perhaps fears) upon his consciousness of the sin of pride, worked upon my sanguine temper, so that I actually thought it within a possibility that I might again be the approved inmate of Bertha's paternal home.

It never occurred to me that there was another and safer alternative, in returning, by a noble effort of resolution, the very next day to Oxford. The result was that I fled from decision, and resolved to trust to the chapter of accidents; perhaps, on some occasions, as good an ally as we can have.

One thing was clear, that I could not leave York without again waiting upon these two interesting friends; in which opinion Granville himself, when I consulted him next morning, concurred; and having previously sent inquiries, and found that the sufferers had passed a good night, we set out after breakfast, Granville to pay duty and offer services, I to submit to whatever doom might be awarded me by the new ally I have mentioned.

What this ally meant yet to do I could not tell, but it was evident, from the hurry and movement we found among Mr. Hastings' people, that the present state of things was not the order of the day.

Mr. Hastings was so much recovered, and Bertha so anxious to give him the comforts of home, that after having consulted Sandford, who thought the temporary access he had suffered had subsided, and that there was no danger, it was resolved to move homeward that very morning.

Thus I was like an ill-fated mariner, who, after being tempest-tost, and gratified with the sight of port, is suddenly blown off, and driven again to sea. Granville was, of course, to accompany them; and as for me, I had nothing left but to express all wishes for their welfare, and to announce that in a few hours I should be on the way to Oxford.

Bertha said nothing, but, as I thought, looked significantly at her father, who then asked me if this was in consequence of college duty, or only my own wish. "If the first," said he, "I can have nothing to observe; but if you are not obliged to return, I own I should be sorry to part so soon with a young gentleman of so good a name, who always shewed so much kindness to my poor son, and lately so much interest about myself. For the first I fear he was but ill requited; to requite the last may not, I hope, be beyond our power."

I observed Bertha's eyes looked down at these words, yet as if they were not unexpected. Granville looked surprised, and I myself knew not how to look, except that I believe I looked very much like a fool. But as Mr. Hastings evidently waited my answer, I

hesitatingly stammered out that my leave of absence was confined to no particular day.

"Then come with us," said Mr. Hastings; "there is just a place in the carriage for you, and God knows I have sufficient need of real friends not to lose them if I can help it."

He said this with a sigh, and Bertha, with a suppressed and trembling voice, as if to herself, observed, "I am sure he was a real friend to him who is gone."

"You will then come with us?" continued Mr. Hastings, looking for my answer.

My heart was full, and I could only bow a too willing consent.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I AGAIN VISIT FOLJAMBE PARK.

Heaven keep your honour safe. Amen!

SHAKESPEARE.—*Measure for Measure*.

WHOEVER has read me thus far, may be able to imagine my feelings when once again visiting a place which was the most loved object of my memory, and where my young mind had first seemed to know what it was to live.

When we arrived at the gates, how different were my feelings from those with which I first saw them opened to let in a view of what I thought Paradise! How did my heart thrill when I saw and remembered the spot (never indeed forgotten) where the youthful Bertha bounded into the arms of her brother, that brother now no more, and all her charming vivacity beat down and subdued by her recent and unlooked-for misfortune. All about her and about the place, then gaiety itself, was now in deep mourning. Yet was she only still more lovely, for the interest which this threw into her every look and gesture, occupied, however, far more with her father than herself.

Mr. Hastings seemed more easy as he entered his home, fondly embracing Bertha as she led him through the hall to his cabinet, and while tears dropt fast, forcing a smile when she said "My dear, dear father, you will still be happy, please God."

"Yes!" said he with emphasis, "please God."

He then shook hands with Granville and me, and shut himself up with his daughter, now his only—always his greatest—comfort. Presently, however, she came out again, though only for a moment, to say her father begged us to consider ourselves masters of the place till he was fitter to make us welcome. She then returned

to him, nor did we see them again till dinner-time, several hours afterwards.

“A most extraordinary position this for you, my good friend,” said Granville, as we walked into the park.

“I can scarcely believe it myself,” replied I, “nor do I know whether I have done well or ill.”

“Ill, be assured,” said he; “and I again say, *Experto crede Roberto.*”

“You think, then, I have run wilfully into danger?”

“You have run into the cannon’s mouth,” said Granville.

“I can but die,” I answered; and we walked on in a sort of cloudy silence, which was for some time without interruption.

At length, and as if he had continued the conversation in his own mind, Granville resumed, “If you had ever been encouraged; if you had ever ascertained whether she had any, and what feeling towards you, so as to have given a gleam—a glimmering of light to conduct you! But to falter on voluntarily in darkness, with neither prospect nor clue—oh, the infatuation—the madness! to say nothing of the dishonour, even if you could succeed!”

“Hold!” said I, with agitation; “there at least I am invulnerable. Could I think Miss Hastings gave me one tender thought—one feeling that distinguished me from the rest of mankind—I could leave her for ever, and live upon that thought for life. I could watch her at a distance, and rejoice in her happiness with another who was worthy. But this is all; ‘This is the head and front of my offending;’ as well as of my ambition. As to address her in form would be insanity, so to endeavour secretly to seduce her affections, even, as you say, if I could succeed, would be as far from my endeavour as abhorrent to my principles.”

“Nobly said, and sincerely, I have no doubt,” returned Granville. “We shall see how principles and practice accord.” And we again walked on in silence.

In a few minutes he continued—“It is evident that you have achieved much with the father, and you will, no doubt, renew your juvenile intimacy with the daughter. Neither of them is insensible (which is in your favour with the father at least) to your claims to a high and ancient descent, however obscured by present circumstances; and those circumstances there is now no influential votary of high life at their elbow, to mark with contempt or hold up to disdain.”

“And what of all this?” asked I, with some emotion, for I did not like the seeming insinuation.

“That your principles,” returned he, “will be put to trial, and your philosophy exposed to danger. Your prudence, however, will, I am persuaded, triumph, and you will retreat before you are absolutely ruined. Pray heaven you may, and that it be not too late.”

Though I was persuaded that all this was said in a spirit of friendship, yet I liked not its tone. It seemed ironical, almost taunting; certainly less kind than his usual manner. It was apparent that my translation, as he called it, to Foljambe Park, had not given him pleasure. I did not suspect him of being one of those counsellors so jealous of their own wisdom that they would rather a friend suffered than their prophecy be defeated; but I did begin to suspect (for the very first time, and at a great distance, but still to suspect) that he had not lately trusted himself so much with his cousin for nothing. In short, deeply in love myself, how could I be surprised if this susceptible, warm, and imaginative man should be also a stricken deer, wounded by the same shaft that had pierced me? This I frankly told him, and watched the effect with anxiety.

He received it, as I thought, strangely, though not with indifference: for after uttering the name of Bertha two or three times, as if surprised, he shook his head; then, as if recollecting himself, said with a smile, "How delightfully, if I were so inclined, could I play upon and torment your feelings! How put you to the proof of your professions, by telling you your suspicions were right, and that I *am* not only the rival you think me, but likely to succeed. It is well for me that the fashion of wearing swords is gone, else upon such a declaration, and in so retired a spot, with no witnesses but the deer, what dangers should I not run. However, 'mark how a plain tale shall put you down,'—if I ought not rather to fear it might put you up, in your jealousy for your mistress's power,—when I tell you that I can see her, speak to her, serve her, admire and revere her, and yet, for reasons best known to myself, take the liberty of not loving her."

"Astonishing!" said I.

"Not so much so as your unreasonableness," answered he. "For it seems with you, there is but one Bertha in the world, and her you would very modestly appropriate to yourself."

The sting of this reply was lost in the joy I felt that my fears were groundless, and so I told him, though I could not help adding, "your invulnerability to her *must* be owing to your being wounded elsewhere."

"Of course," replied he, and, as I thought, he reddened; "for, otherwise, how would it be possible to resist her, or escape vengeance from you for doing so? Pray observe the justice of all this. Your blood is resolved to be up one way or the other. If I am a rival, I must fight for being so; if not, for not doing proper homage to her charms. It is well that my Lord De Clifford is not Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and that chivalry is over. I should else fare but ill. However, you are fond of Waller, I believe, and sometimes relish his delicate thoughts and nice little turns. Perhaps you may remember Sacharissa and Amorel?"

‘ When gentle Amoret complains,
I have sense of all her pains ;
But for Sacharissa I
Do not only grieve, but die.’

“ Now pray, may not a Sacharissa prevent me from thinking more of Bertha than if she were an Amoret ? ”

I need not say that I endured—nay, was pleased at this raillery, because it assured me so pointedly that my fears were without cause. Yet I would have given something to have been told the reasons, *best known to himself*, which clothed him in such armour of proof against the power of Bertha ; in short, whether he had, and who was his Sacharissa. As he did not, however, offer to tell me, I did not presume to ask him, thinking a time might come when I should discover, or he reveal it.

We continued our walk, therefore, in renewed amity, for I was now convinced that the expostulations he urged, on the madness and danger of my headlong indulgence of delight in being near Bertha, were all founded in real and pure regard. And, truth to say, when he, in more free and forcible language than he had ever yet used, represented how visionary it was to suppose that a person who had his bread to seek by long dependance upon the rich and great, could come forward like a rich and great one himself, and expect to be treated as such, either by father or daughter, I was without power to reply.

“ Mr. Hastings,” said he, “ constitutionally proud, though also naturally pious, and softened by his present affliction, seeks to make up to you the injustice of his son. He has not a suspicion that, in doing so, he is setting fire to a train, which he does not think exists. And as to Bertha herself, with all her softness, has she not, in her resistance to her brother’s imputations, given sufficient proof that she is not a person to be lightly thought of, either on the score of dignity or prudence ? The very frankness with which she expresses her esteem for you, and her sense of obligation for the interest you have taken, demonstrate at once how totally free she is from all thought of your attachment, much more of her returning it in the slightest degree. This very visit, planned between father and daughter, to shew their sense of your attention to them on the most melancholy occasion of their lives, shews also how totally free both of them are from any notion of the feeling which animates you, or of her approving it, should it ever be known.”

Devoted lover as I was, this sensible representation, I own, sank deep within me, and blighted all those little buds of hope and joy which, I knew not why, I had suffered to charm me, in consequence of finding myself, by express invitation, once more on this happy soil. That it was the direct contrary of what I had in my sanguine temper thought it, fully appeared from Granville’s forcible remark

upon it. I owned it so to him, and asked his advice upon the conduct to pursue.

“Fly,” said he, “if it were possible, this instant; but as that cannot well be, to-morrow. To remain, is to taste of a poisoned banquet—to drink of the goblet of Comus—to be lost in the garden of Armida. Your excuse is easy : the necessity of returning to Oxford.”

“Give me time to reflect by myself, and let me leave you,” said I, walking away; and I plunged into the thickest part of the park.

Here, for the hundredth time, I took myself to task; and, for the hundredth time, worked myself up to a resolution to play the hero; in fact, to take leave of Bertha and love, and devote myself to the world. “Upon the whole,” said I, “I have gained by this visit. I have shewn myself superior to resentment against a friend who had used me ill; have discharged a duty of respect to his suffering family, and have at least conciliated their kindness and esteem more than I ever had done before. This ought and shall satisfy me;” and I resolved to quit Foljambe the next day.

Who, however, can foresee or control his fate? The agitation of the last few days had committed inroads on my weak frame, which, as I have related, was never strong; and my peculiar temperament, as may have appeared, was sensitive to a degree, particularly when operated upon by mental impressions. I had often made efforts before to conquer this powerful passion, but never when the object of it was so close to my vision. To see this young and beautiful creature, both her beauty and her character set off in tenfold attraction by the sweetness and self-command she exhibited towards her parent, a personification of filial piety (perhaps the holiest of female virtues)—to do this, and conquer in the struggle, without the severest suffering, was impossible. Bertha’s endeavour to infuse cheerfulness into her father, by appearing cheerful herself, shewed her in more beautiful colours than any in which she had yet appeared. Her attentions to him during and after the dinner, her smiles, and the pleasure she evinced when they succeeded, as they often did, in soothing him, made her appear an angel of light. Nor was she of less use to him in diverting his attention from a seeming trouble brought upon him by a large packet of letters, sent him through the Hanover mission in London, from Germany. It arrived just as the dessert came upon table, and, in some excitement, he would have retired with it to his study, but she said, with winning persuasion,

“Not now, dearest father; there is nothing in it, I am sure, that will not wait till to-morrow, and I won’t let your comfort at home be so soon disturbed. Heaven knows, you have need enough for it, so give me this naughty packet. I will put it away, and you shall promise me not to look at it till to-morrow.”

So saying, she almost playfully took the packet from his not unwilling hand—for, in truth, he seemed little equal to business—and retired with it alone.

The immense seal, teeming with arms and supporters, with an ample ducal coronet above, denoted whence the packet came.

“Prince Adolphus, I suppose?” said Granville; to which Mr. Hastings assented.

This revived my recollections of his German connections, almost forgotten; and I supposed Prince Adolphus was one of his illustrious relations of the faderland.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

I DISCOVER MORE AND MORE OF BERTHA'S BEAUTIFUL CHARACTER; BUT, AS IF THROUGH BLAMABLE CURIOSITY, I AM PUNISHED FOR IT.

Sir, there lies such secrets in this farthel and box, as none must know but the king.
SHAKSPEARE.—*Winter's Tale*.

If a bloody coxcomb be a hurt, you have hurt me.
Twelfth Night.

THE filial sweetness shewn by Bertha in comforting and soothing the grief of her afflicted parent, and her firmness while so occupied, in suppressing her own, only made me feel more and more devoted to her; and, being so, more than ever desponding, as to my recovery. I found that Granville was right, and that the proximity occasioned by being in the same house with her did me harm. I wished I had not come, grew confused, and longed to retire from the table. To recover myself, therefore, as soon as we rose I sallied out alone, to breathe the freshness of that garden where once I had been the companion of her little labours.

Alas! the remembrance of this, though it gave me pleasure, was far from relieving me. Still less did my cure progress, when I entered the summer-house which I formerly described as decorated with the armorial bearings of her maternal ancestors. This was, in summer time, a sort of supplementary common room, in addition to the great saloon, for those of the family or guests who preferred its airiness (for it had windows on all sides), and its proximity to the flower-garden, to assemble and adopt any little amusement that might present itself. Hence it was furnished with different musical instruments; and on the walls were many maps, and in the window-seats whole files of newspapers—so that it was as often called the cassino as the summer-house.

When I first entered, what struck me most was a bust, in the

purest Parian marble, of a most beautiful woman, of commanding, yet soft, and even playful features. It spoke sense, spirituality, nobleness, and gentleness at the same time—youth withal—and was a fit pendant for Bertha herself, had there also been one of her.

The name of “Honora, Viscountess Hungerford,” was inscribed on this bust; I supposed it some friend or relation of the family. There was also, over the chimney, an engraving in a gold frame, of a handsome young officer (from his mustachios apparently foreign), in a hussar dress, about twenty or one-and-twenty years of age. The name here inscribed was “Prince Adolphus of Saxe Eisenach.” In another frame, to match it, were the same arms as were over the door on the outside, blazoned in beautiful, dazzling colours, evidently by the hand of a herald.

“The family at least seem not to undervalue this alliance,” said I to myself; yet I thought it might be only a fair compliment to the princess, Bertha’s mother; and, as to the young hussar, what more natural than to hang up the picture of a handsome cousin in a casino?

Bertha often, nay daily, visited this room, and generally conducted her friends there. She also placed the authors she might be in the course of reading on a large table, which took up almost one side of the interior. In the midst of them an ample album, superbly bound, containing many extracts from works in print, and some in manuscript in different hands, courted notice by a display of its open, well-filled leaves.

As an open album seemed free to all the world, I without scruple began to read. I found it full of sweet proofs of the elegance of the taste of its owner, and of the cultivation of a natural, polished, and refined mind. Judge of my pleasure, however, when almost the first thing that met my eye was my own stanzas, “The Lover’s Hope,” and the pathetic lament of Helena, which we had canvassed with so much interest by the side of the brook at York.

What sensations, what associations did not this recall? And what wonder if all my interest was excited to trace still farther the feelings of this sweet mind, in the different moral or poetical passages of different writers which it had thought it worth while thus to collect.

I could willingly myself fill another book with them; but suffice it that all the selections in the collection exhibited a justness, I may say, a holiness of feeling, and a classic taste, that to me were enchanting. What I particularly observed was, that they were all from masters; no second-rate name was to be found: a sure sign how well directed had been her studies.

I was pleased to see much from Milton. One passage from *Comus* was so scored with marks of approbation, and indicated so much virtuous thought, that I cannot help transcribing it from

memory. It is the answer of the Lady to the sophistry of the Enchanter :

“ Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance.
If every just man that now pines in want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly pampered luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed,
And she no whit *encumbered with her store*,
And then the giver would be better thanked.”

Milton seemed a great favourite, and among other extracts from him, was the sonnet in the *Nativity*, on May Morning :—

“ Now the bright Morning Star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail! bounteous May!”

This was in the holy verse of Milton; take other passages, of a still sweeter character, in prose, but from what author did not appear. Indeed they were not embodied in the book itself, but were written with other extracts on a loose sheet, left (as if carelessly) among the pages; and I own that what with their beauty, and what with the thought that they were a transcript of Bertha's mind, I could not resist the desire to copy them.

Concluding, therefore, that Mr. Hastings would not in his present situation be left during any part of the evening by his daughter or nephew, I seized a pen (*her pen as I thrillingly felt when I grasped it*) and copied what was entitled

“ THE LORD'S DAY.”

It ran thus :—

“ Never shall I forget the impression made on my heart this morning, by the union of personal feelings of pleasure with piety of mind, occasioned by the idea of the day. The scene was the fresh field bordering on the garden; the air mild and genial; the dews sweetening every daisy, primrose, and cowslip, and indeed every blade of grass. But there was also a stillness exercising an indescribable influence over the soul. The tranquillity was more soothing than any I had ever before experienced. It seemed as if the whole creation had borne testimony to the propriety of its appellation of a *day of rest*. It certainly appeared to be enjoyed even by the animals around me as well as myself. The cattle had all lain down, and even the lambs, usually so frolic, were nestled by their mothers' sides. The birds were silent, and a numerous poultry were perched in repose on the bars of a fence which separated a

haystack, full of fragrance, from the field. The quiet was so universal that every thing seemed afraid to disturb it; the very bees had ceased to hum. I felt it in my mind and in my nerves; in my senses and in my thoughts: for all, all, were at peace. My father had blessed me with peculiar fervour that morning, and my heart dilated with joy and gratitude. The soothing, indeed, which I felt all over me, brought me at once to heaven. It is GOD, said I, that has made me thus susceptible. It is His bounty that I should thus feel. And feel it I did more and more tenderly, as well as more gratefully, when I said with an emotion worth a world,

“THIS IS THE LORD’S DAY.”

The other and shorter extract, the possession of which I coveted, was headed,

“SELF-APPROBATION.

“Yes! one self-approving hour, though retired from the gaze and acclamations of the world, is worth all that the pomp and glory of that world can confer. It refreshes the heart, though in the deepest seclusion, even in the solitude of the night, when no one sees us but our Maker. How sweet then is true religion, when, not merely the offspring of the understanding and reason, but the effusion of a grateful heart, worshipping from love! In sickness and sorrow, under misfortune and mortification, its voice, conveyed by this self-approbation, consoles and supports. It is really that ‘medicine which ministers to a diseased mind, and plucks a rooted sorrow from the memory.’”

O Bertha! how did I feel these beautiful sentiments, the indications of your own natural and blameless heart! How more than ever did I love you for them! Thus was that heart laid bare. Was it possible to read such thoughts and such language without blessing her?

There were other passages, from French and Italian writers, as well as English, which portrayed her dear mind on other subjects; but I forbear: though I found from several articles, how much she admired the simplicity of nature, and preferred it to all inflation and meretricious ornament. One began with

“Il naturale è sempre bello;”

another with

“Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound.”

There was also a passage from Sévigné, which shewed her disposition well.

“Pour moi, j’aime encore mieux le mal que le remède, et je

trouve plus doux d'avoir de la peine à quitter les gens que j'aime, que de les aimer *médiocrement*."

O! kindest of creatures, thought I, if ever thou lovest, what will not thy love be!

I hasten, however, to the last selection in the album, which was in the form of a letter, in French; whether a genuine letter, or only an exercise, I could not tell, for it did not appear to whom it was addressed, or by whom written, only in form it was headed,

"A MA CHÈRE MAMAN."

As Bertha had no mother, this made me suppose it was a fiction, and being in the open album, I classed it with the rest, and had the less scruple to peruse it. It seemed to represent an answer to a letter which had been received, and it ran thus:—

"Je ne doute point, chère Maman, que le séjour de la campagne ne vous soit très utile. Le spectacle qu'on y découvre excite les réflexions; la solitude qu'on y goûte favorise les rêveries. La terre est un livre, expliqué par les physiciens, commenté par les naturalistes, et c'est Dieu lui-même qui en est l'auteur. Il a écrit de sa main ces merveilles qui ravissent la vue, et qui, sous mille différentes couleurs, nous apprennent à connaître sa puissance et sa majesté. Rien de plus agréable que de s'égarer vers le soir dans les magnifiques avenues dont vous faites si bien la description. C'est là qu'on se forme une compagnie de sa mémoire et de son imagination. Il semble alors que l'âge d'or revient pas à pas, et que toutes les passions sont endormies."

I was, as I have said, charmed with this picture of mind, for so I reckoned it. Whether it was a real letter or not, I did not much care; as I was convinced the feeling described was genuine; and what was not my pleasure, to find my own favourite sentiments thus glowing in the bosom of the being I loved best, and admired most in all the earth!

It was time that I should leave this dangerous occupation, which acted like a spell upon my vision and my faculties. It would have been better for me never to have looked at it, or rather never to have entered the summer-house. Certainly these proofs of one of the most delightful and accomplished of minds, by no means weakened the effect of the most lovely of persons. I therefore tore myself away, though I knew not where to go to escape from myself.

My musing took a thousand directions, and my feet almost as many. There was not a path in the park which I did not explore, the whole time occupied with the one engrossing subject, so that I forgot the advance of the evening, and how far I had strayed from the house. Even the twilight had now subsided and was lost in absolute darkness; for though the sky might have afforded some

glimmering of light in the open spaces, I had now penetrated the deepest covert of the preserves—

“ Whose lofty trees 'yclad with summer's pride
Did spread so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
Not percible by power of any star.”

In short, to quote another poet—

“ Nox erat, et terris animalia somnus habebat; ”

for, though now far off, I faintly heard the turret clock at the house strike eleven, and only then thought of the truant I had played towards the family, who must have been astonished, if not offended, at my absence. Nevertheless, I continued to “ feed on thoughts ” which did *not* move “ harmonious numbers,” but waged war with one another, till my whole heart became a seat of contest and agitation little fitted for sober resolve.

The necessity, however, of finding my way back to the house suspended my feelings for a moment, when I heard a considerable rushing among the bushes, followed by a voice exclaiming, “ Damn them, they are here.”

Somewhat alarmed, I called out—“ Who are you ? ” to which I just heard the reply, “ We'll shew you fast enough ; ” and at that instant I was levelled with the ground by the blow of a bludgeon. My senses were not quite gone, for I heard the fearful words of another voice, “ Damn the rascal, sarve him out—finish him ; ” and another blow descending on my head left me insensible.

How long I remained so I could not tell, when I found myself reviving in the arms of two of Mr. Hastings' keepers, who, from my long and mysterious absence, had been sent with lanthorns in search of me. Finding I bled profusely, they shewed no small signs of alarm, asking, as if to console me, whether I really felt murdered, and obligingly adding, “ it was lucky the gentleman had got into the preserves, for this here blow was meant for one of us.”

By this I found I was indebted for being laid prostrate to a gang of poachers, and was congratulated on being left alive, though considerably shattered.

While they endeavoured to raise me, we were all alarmed by another loud halloo close at hand, and the keepers had recourse to their staves ; but we were relieved by finding it proceeded from Granville, who had also come in search of me, and seen the lights. His surprise and concern at my condition may be imagined, to say nothing of his alarm at seeing my head bound with bloody handkerchiefs.

The keepers acquainted him with the cause, and I had strength

“ 'Twas night, when every creature, void of cares,
The common gift of balmy slumber shares.”

Dryden's Virgil.

to get upon my legs, though not to walk, and we were half a mile from the house. In this emergency he detached one of the men to the stables for a park chair, with an order not to disclose what had happened; which was obeyed like most orders to keep news secret, especially when it is of an alarming character.

In fact, when we arrived at the hall, which it took full half an hour to do, we found the whole family in commotion and on the watch, Mr. Hastings and Bertha at their head—the first in great agitation—the last as pale as death. Spite of my suffering, which was severe enough, I anxiously watched her demeanour, and hoped, I own, for sweet words of sympathy and interest. She spoke not a word, except in a sort of murmur, casting up her eyes to heaven, and saying “It is a mercy he is alive!” then clasping her hands in a sort of fervour, as if in mental prayer.

This was no more than what any other young woman might have done, yet it pleased me. I was carried up stairs by the servants, she following to the chamber door, when she looked at her watch with some earnestness, saying to her father—“It will be full half an hour before he can be here, even if at home; pray God he may be so.”

Mr. Hastings, who had shewn the kindest attention, explained this “My good daughter,” said he, “sent off an express for Sandford; he will be here presently, and, I trust, will set you right. It will be a warning to you.”

He was going on, as he afterwards told me, to scold me for night wandering, but seeing I looked white and faint, forbore. Meantime, Bertha had reviewed all the cordials in the housekeeper’s room, and sent her maid with one to my bed-side. She never lost her collectedness.

To shorten matters, Sandford came about midnight, and pronounced that the brain was safe, though there might be a concussion, in which case he said the profuse bleeding, which made things so frightful in appearance, might, in reality, have been of service. He even applied leeches to the swollen and livid temples, having brought them on purpose, in consequence of learning, in a note expressly from Bertha, the particulars of the wound, as she learned them from the keeper. Every thing, however, was to depend upon a quiet night, to watch which, Mrs. Margaret, Bertha’s maid (with whom, I believe I have said I had been a sort of a favourite during my first visit), volunteered, with the full approbation of her mistress. Sandford, at the request of that mistress and her father, agreed to sleep at the house.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DELIRIUM BETRAYS ME—STRANGE THAT A CHAMBERMAID CANNOT KEEP A SECRET.

What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

I BEGIN a new chapter to say that a blow on the head, well laid on by a poacher, is no trifling matter, and that, though sense may be restored, it may not continue. The agitation I had gone through previous to that occasioned by this ruffian blow, and renewed by the recent scene, put an end to the hope of that quiet on which my cure was to depend. I slept, indeed, but it was a sleep of fever and tumult; my dreams were horrible; they were of Bertha and her brother, both of whom I thought lay murdered before me. I woke, but the delusion continued. I was delirious; I raved, and my raving was all of Bertha.

“I loved her,” I cried (so it was reported). “Forty thousand brothers could not, with all their quantity of love, make up my sum. She is gone, but I shall marry her in heaven.”

This was repeated more than once, and Mrs. Margaret, in consternation, fled to Sandford for succour. He came; my delirium continued; and I told him Lord Albany was an evil genius, who had killed Bertha, but that Bertha was betrothed to me.

Alas! poor mad brain! to what had a poacher’s arm reduced thee!

The good Sandford used all his skill to recal my mind; and after many more incoherencies of the same nature, all turning upon the death of Foljambe and my marriage with Bertha, he succeeded.

One of his methods to restore reason was to encourage what I was disposed to say, by appearing to converse with me. Among other things, I happened to say, “She is the queen of flowers.” He asked, “Who?” I said, “Bertha.” I then exclaimed, “Oh, beautiful one, fit to be queen of the world!” He again asked, “Who?” and I again answered, “Bertha!” “Do you love her, then?” said he, on purpose to draw me into trying conclusions, which he held was the best way to make reason return. My reply was, “Do I love heaven? and do I not weep for her?” and the notion of weeping produced the act, which, by the relief it gave to my hot brain, was the first indication I gave of a step towards recovery.

I did not learn, however, what had passed till two days afterwards, when I had fully recovered my reason, by sleep and the use of opiates. All the next day I was kept in bed, the room darkened,

and not a word allowed to be spoken ; though Granville kindly relieved Mrs. Margaret in watching by my bed-side ; and several times Mr. Hastings came in to inquire, which he seemed to do with interest.

A greater comfort, however, was the next day, when Mrs. Margaret assured me that her mistress was “ in a peck of troubles ” at what had happened. My only reply to this was, that she was very condescending ; to which Mrs. Margaret, who was as prone to talk of her mistress as most other waiting gentlewomen, replied,

“ Indeed she is, sir, the most condescendingest, sweetest lady in England, and so you would say if you knew her as we do. Only the wonderment is, that when she might have so many great lords and barrownights, who all court her, she will never marry.”

This excited my interest, and I wished her to go on, which she was very willing to do, without being spurred. However, as a little impetus, I just observed, “ Probably there is no one good enough for her ? ”

“ Oh dear no,” replied Mrs. Margaret, “ that can’t be the reason ; that is, as far as quality and money are concerned : for there was my lord (Albany, of course), and Sir Harry, and her cousin, young Mr. Mansell, who has, that is to say, *will* have, a mint of money ; and they were all dying for her ; but she refused ’em all, and I am told (for she never talks to me about them things) that she will never marry at all, being like married already to her papa, who is as fond of her as she of him, and good reason for both. But Lord bless you, sir, the doctor told me not to talk to you, and here I am, as if it would make you better instead of worse ; but the truth be, that I could talk for ever about Miss Bertha, and you don’t seem to dislike it neither yourself, sir.”

“ It does me good,” said I.

“ And well it may,” added the dame, “ for she is just like a kindly May morning, that does good to everybody and every thing. To be sure, we all wondered how you could leave her in all her grief the first evening she came home, and go without your supper to them woods, and all to be knocked on the head by a nasty poacher ; but there is no accounting for tastes. However, I hope to see you pure well again soon, and no more talking in your sleep.”

“ Sleep ! did I talk in my sleep ! ”

“ Aye, that you did, to me and the doctor too, and all about Miss Bertha.”

“ Good heavens ! I hope—— ! For God’s sake what did I say ? ”

“ Oh, I hardly know, but a great deal of romancing ; for you talked of loving her more than forty thousand brothers, if she had them ; so of course you thought there were many more than poor Mister Charles ; and besides that, you said you were married to Miss Bertha in heaven, and would go and live with her there ; and

that she was a rose, and a queen, and I don't know what besides. But the doctor, he knows all about it, and said you were wandering, and did not know what you said ; and for my part, I thought so too, and so did Miss Bertha herself, when I told her of it. But, good God, sir, I am afraid you are going off again, for you just look as white as a sheet, and as frightful as when you were first knocked down. Dear me, what shall I get you?"

Something indeed seemed necessary ; for the thought of all I had said in my delirium being known, not only to Margaret, but to Bertha herself, filled me with agony ; I felt my wound severely, and was very sick.

Luckily Sandford was just arrived from York, and came in at the moment. He saw my distress, and asked Margaret the cause of it, who declared she did not know, for she had only been having the most innocentest conversation possible, just to amuse me, as I seemed rather low. When, however, having sent Margaret out of the room, he heard the particulars, he was not surprised, but told me not to alarm myself, for that Miss Hastings was much too sensible a creature, as well as too just, to take any thing amiss from a man not himself.

"To be sure," said he, "if she did, you are in a bad way, for you have a great deal more to answer for than what Margaret told you."

He then informed me of all I had said to himself about Bertha ; "And, by the way," said he, "it is well, perhaps, that Mr. Hastings is not Dionysius, who, you know, put a man to death for dreaming that he had killed him, because it denoted a foregone conclusion. Here, however, if your heart is as safe as your head, as I hope it is, you have nothing to fear."

Though he said this playfully, and to recover me from the mental excitement occasioned by Margaret's garrulity, I felt seriously alarmed at the thought that Bertha had been made conscious of her power over me, even in delirium. Sandford saw it, and bent all his efforts to do away the effect, but rather too emphatically, as I thought, dwelling upon the impossibility of Bertha's taking it ill, and her conviction of the total impossibility of my thinking of the thing itself. He succeeded, however, in calming me, and left me, saying, I was going on well.

Thus, said I to myself, everybody concurs in holding, that to think, feel, and act as I do, is madness ; and the best I can expect is, that Bertha, from forming the same judgment, will acquit me of presumption, and still allow me to be her friend ; which will be felicity enough. The thought soothed.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I BID FAREWELL TO ALL HOPES OF BERTHA, AND LEAVE FOLJAMBE PARK FOR EVER.

The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Winter's Tale.*

Although
The air of paradise did fan the house,
And angels offic'd all, I will be gone,
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,
To console thine ear.

All's Well that Ends Well.

IT was two days more before I was able, or rather willing, to quit my room ; for though my wound was healing fast, my strength recruited, and I had no more delirium, my vanity, or (as vanity has been characterised) my desire to make myself agreeable, could not bear the thought of appearing before Bertha with my head bound up, to hide the patches still necessary for my cure.

Both Mr. Hastings and Bertha congratulated me cordially enough on my reappearance among them ; yet, as my fears whispered me, they were not *quite* so cordial as they had been. There was a constraint, a thoughtfulness, in the demeanour of both, which I did not like. Was this owing to the tales told by the delirium ? I was afraid to answer.

The same constraint seemed to pursue them the rest of the day, which, as Mr. Hastings was naturally reserved, did not in him surprise me ; and for Bertha herself, though of so very frank a nature, much allowance was to be made, from the mournful circumstances that surrounded her. Still one would have thought that, as I had been invited with the express view of contributing comfort to the family under those circumstances, I might have been admitted to a fuller companionship than was now awarded me. The saloon where we had generally sat was avoided, and Bertha, if not closeted with her father, passed the whole morning, and even the evening, in her own room ; so that, except at meal, there seemed an absolute interdiction of intercourse.

This continued all the next day, when a still more marked incident proved the change I had noticed. Observing my young friend cloaked at the hall-door, preparing for a walk, and offering to attend her, she protested so strongly against my wish, on the score of my weakened state, although I felt quite myself, that I saw this could only proceed from design, and I instantly desisted. That day I saw her no more, except at dinner and tea, when the conversation, contrary to its wont, was altogether uninteresting.

Alarmed and mortified, I had recourse to my usual counsellor, Granville, who told me news which prompted serious reflection. It seems that my unfortunate wanderings were known to Mr. Hastings as well as to Bertha. O! these chambermaids! Mrs. Margaret could not retain such a remarkable secret, but told it to Mr. Marvel, Mr. Hastings' butler, and he to Mr. Hastings himself, thinking it a mere amusing anecdote of a gentleman out of his mind. The minutiae, indeed, were not stated, but merely how the young gentleman had run on about Miss Bertha; and when Mr. Hastings, with some displeasure, checked his servant, whom, not liking the subject, he accused of an exaggerated account, Mr. Marvel, in defence of his own and Mrs. Margaret's integrity, said it all passed before the doctor, who knew all the particulars.

Greatly annoyed, Mr. Hastings immediately assailed Sandford for the facts, who very frankly gave them, treating the whole affair as of no consequence, and as a common occurrence in deliriums, for which a patient was no more answerable than for a dream.

Mr. Hastings hoped it might be so, but the particular phrases, as well as ideas, struck him. In relating this afterwards to Granville, he did not conceal the fears which the incident had prompted, pitying and speaking well of me, but no more.

"By this," said Granville, "it should seem that his humility is on the wane, and his pride resuming the ascendant."

My suspicions, as to a change of manner both in father and daughter, were thus confirmed, and I was not the happier for it. My pride, however, saved me. I was resolved that, even if the supposed discovery should amount to proof in their minds of a presumptuous attachment, not to be entertained, they should be under no necessity to take precautions against it—in fact, that I would myself relieve them from their fears, and retire from their presence, never to return.

In this resolution I was confirmed by Granville, and only waited for a proper opportunity to take my leave in form. But to think that Bertha could slight me (she who had been so kind) was difficult.

Thanks, however, to that self-respect—in other words, pride—of which probably, by this, I have shewn I had a sufficient share, together with the few drops of Clifford and Bardolfe blood which still ran in my veins, my grief did not get the better of my courage. I was at least resolved not to be pitied, as Granville said I was, by Mr. Hastings; and if his daughter knew I loved her, I determined to shew that I could also leave her. I almost wished that she would use me ill, and, vile and ungrateful as I was, I began to accuse her of caprice, perhaps of coquetting; such "confirmation strong" does the least change of manners towards a lover become, if once his jealousy is roused. Yet the pure and honourable Bertha knew nothing of caprice; far from wounding a fellow-creature, she never

harmed a fly, nor ever wished ill to the meanest wretch alive. I mention it, therefore, to shew the admirable justice, fairness, and reasonableness of a man in love.

My then temper, however, by no means stopt here, and while in the act of taking my wise resolutions, I happened to turn over Shakspeare, and fortuitously lighted upon the scene in *Hamlet*, where Ophelia seeks to return the gifts with which the prince had presented her. At that moment the little Gresset given me by Bertha two or three years before, and which I never was without, was lying by my side.

The feelings and language of Ophelia seemed opposite to my own case, and I read the passages more than once, as almost ominous—certainly I could not read them without emotion.

“ My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have long'd to redeliver.
I pray you now receive them.”

“ No! not I.
I never gave you aught.”

“ Indeed, my lord, you know right well you did;
And with them words, of so sweet breath composed,
As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,
Take them again; for, to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.”

Like Ophelia, I felt that Bertha's rich gift had now waxed poor, from what I supposed unkindness in the giver, and I resolved to return it. With Gresset, therefore, in my pocket, I determined to seek out Miss Hastings, in order to restore her book, and then to take my leave for ever of the persons whose consequence to me, even in the act of renouncing them, equalled the value of the world.

With this view, I anxiously watched the motions of Bertha. Could I but see her alone one little, little minute, I thought I should be satisfied.

My wishes were so far crowned, that a very few minutes afterwards I saw her from my windows, going towards her favourite summer-house. I immediately followed, and presented myself at the door. She seemed disconcerted at my approach, and was evidently embarrassed. A consciousness, as I thought, of something unusual gleamed over her features. Certainly, though there was still an expression of kindness, and even interest about my health, the enchanting frankness of manner, which had always so won me, was gone.

She of course inquired after my wound, and looking, as I construed it, as if she wished I would retire, asked, if it were quite prudent to leave the house so soon? I replied, it was so little otherwise, that I contemplated returning to Oxford the next day.

“ So soon,” cried she, with surprise, but with nothing like oppo-

sition. "Can we hope, Mr. De Clifford, that you will be well enough to travel so far, after such a serious and shocking accident?"

"My accident," said I, mournfully, "is the least evil I have to bear. It is already unfelt, and will soon be forgotten. Would to God I could say the same of its unhappy consequences."

A blush immediately suffused the cheek of Bertha, which shewed she must have suspected what I meant. Yet, she hesitatingly asked, "What can Mr. De Clifford mean?"

"More, perhaps," replied I, "than I am well able to explain; and yet the heavenly goodness and condescension I have ever found in Miss Hastings may possibly forgive an offence, apparently most presumptuous, but, in reality, most unwittingly, nay, altogether unconsciously, committed."

"Offence! presumption!" exclaimed she; "surely those are terms that can never be applied to the conduct of Mr. De Clifford towards any one, much less to friends who respect him as we do."

"Alas!" said I, "though while in possession of reason, it requires no forecast, nay, it would demand a miracle, to transgress a respect which fills every thought of my brain, and every beat of my heart, yet when reason has strayed, who can answer for the abandoned citadel? Believe me, lady, that the wound to the outward man, inflicted by the ruffian who felled me, was absolutely nothing to the internal horror, the alarm and misery I have felt, ever since I have learned how guiltily my imagination wandered."

The conscious and ingenuous girl here shewed all her consciousness of what I meant, by a blush of rosy red, yet accompanied with an abashed, uneasy air, as if the allusion was irksome to her.

The thought hurt me, and I proceeded rather more boldly.

"It is hence that I have sought this interview, which I grieve to think discomposes you; as, indeed, of what consequence can any feeling of mine be to Miss Hastings? Be assured, however, that my only object is exculpation, which is due to the meanest, if they have suffered injustice; and I claim to say, that should Miss Hastings or her father for one moment suppose that such presumptuous, such audacious aspirations, as I am told escaped me in my frenzy, were the genuine effusions of a mind awake, they will do me an injustice which they themselves might be sorry for."

During this address Bertha stood with her head declined, and her eyes bent upon the ground. She seemed, however, all ear, her colour heightened, and she breathed quick. But whatever of interest this shewed, her reply proved that it was of no flattering sort, couched, as it was, in terms more formal than I had ever heard from her, except in the very first days of our acquaintance. Yet her own justice and candour appeared in every word of it.

"I will not, *Sir*," said she, "affect to be ignorant of what you allude to. Both my father and myself were almost immediately ap-

prized of it ; but I trust, under the lamentable circumstances you were in, you cannot impute to us the injustice of supposing that either your reason knew, or your will approved of, what you must be aware, were it otherwise, would fill us all with uneasiness, and you with regret. No ; without canvassing the language you are pleased to use concerning yourself, of presumption and audacity, pray think better of us than to suppose we could accuse you of doing, or even thinking, when possessed of your reason, any thing which that reason would, I am sure, forbid you to imagine."

Though this was said with her eyes still averted (for though I gazed upon her countenance, yet I could not catch them), it was said firmly and without hesitation, and seemed so complete an extinction of every hope of her favour (if ever I had encouraged one), that it quite decided me in my resolution to return instantly to Oxford, and, if possible, to renounce memory till I became a new man. I own I felt rather in bitterness, yet far from blaming her. But though the petulance I had so unworthily felt was gone, I was not the less mournful when, as I thought it right, I attempted to take my leave. The Gresset, too, which my hand clasped in my pocket, I prepared to surrender ; not from resentment, nor even as poor Ophelia had felt, that the giver had proved unkind—for with unkindness I was just enough to think that Bertha had nothing to do—but purely because to retain it would be dangerous to myself, and I could neither keep nor bestow it elsewhere. I therefore, though, I fear, not without faltering, submissively, yet distantly, thanked her for doing me justice.

"Nevertheless," said I, "though you are kind enough to allay any fear I might have had that one so unworthy could have raised, as it were, his thoughts to heaven——"

"O! Mr. De Clifford," interrupted Bertha, "why this? Indeed you must not breathe a word in this style. I have no pretensions to be so addressed, and surely I have given you no room to think I expect it."

"Enough, madam," said I ; "I stand corrected ; and if it offend you to tell you how much more than any thing that ever beset me I have valued the kindness you and your family have shewn me ; how much it has depressed me to see the necessity of taking leave of you for ever, if only to spare you all future apprehension of what you have, I fear, deemed impertinent ; believe that I am sufficiently punished for it by the change of look and tone which at this moment I observe, and with which, for these last few hours, I cannot but feel I have been regarded. But this makes no difference in the grateful and devoted feelings of honour and esteem with which I have ever viewed both you and yours. I leave you, Madam, and will not tax Mr. Hastings' friendship to renew the honour he has done me, by inviting me again ; happy if I can by this put an

end to any fears of his or yours, if you have entertained them, which the levity and inconsiderateness of servants may have occasioned."

During this speech, Bertha seemed so astounded, that when I here paused, she could not reply. Her colour came and went, and she hardly yet raised her eyes so as to see that I had taken my book from my pocket to present to her. When she saw it in my hand, a look of surprise, curiosity, and doubt as to my intention, flitted across her countenance, and she evidently waited with interest to be told what I meant by producing the well-known book.

I left her not in uncertainty, but, presenting it, observed, "Perhaps no miser's treasure was ever so dear to him as this book has been to me. It has ever been my pride, my pleasure, my companion, and my friend. In no change of scene, in no one hour of the day, and hardly of the night, have I ever been without it. It has solaced and exhilarated many a melancholy moment, when far away, hopeless of seeing you again, and weighed down with a sense of my own comparative humbleness, I have thought of the beautiful giver of it, and of the condescending frankness with which it was given. That delight has, I fear, now left me to return no more. I seem to have offended the giver, or at least she seems estranged from me. Perhaps for me it is as well. It may be better, indeed, that I should look no more upon it; but while in my possession, to lay it aside would I know be impossible; therefore it is best to restore it to its original owner."

Miss Hastings was here much overcome; she breathed thick and fast, and looked greatly moved; yet her collectedness did not desert her. She was surprised, perhaps grieved, but her dignity remained; and though affected as I have described, there seemed no re-action of feeling (if I may so call it) towards me. She received the book from my hand with something like tremor, and I observed a tear fall upon it as she laid it on the table. But quickly recovering—

"Is it possible," said she, "that I can have been so misconstrued in any thing I have said or done, as to be thought, as I evidently am, unjust and capricious? I beseech you, Mr. De Clifford, not to believe me so light, as either to give or withdraw my esteem lightly. I well recollect the pleasure I had in being allowed to present you, as the friend of him who is lost to us, with this poor book. I never thought, or wished, to have it returned; and if it has been so valuable to you, I am sure that is not a reason why the wish should now occur. But if the delight you say you received from it has passed away, it is not for me to refute your opinions, or refuse to receive it back."

Here she looked earnestly at the book as it lay on the table, and a tear again evidently trembled in her eye. Resuming, she went on:

"You talk, Mr. De Clifford, of leaving us to-morrow. My father

cannot oppose it, if you think your duty elsewhere, or what has happened here, requires it; of which you alone are the judge. All I can say—and I do so most sincerely—is to hope that you may not travel before your strength is equal to it. If really, however, you feel strong enough, we cannot oppose your wish. But never can we forget our obligations to you, in coming so promptly and so kindly to support my sinking brother, and afterwards ourselves;—though that was too soon rendered powerless by the lamentable accident under which you have so much suffered. That it should have happened to you while my father's guest, enhances our concern; and coming, too, so close after the most unhappy of all calamities——”

Here her feelings got the better of her; and whatever formality had before appeared, from whatever cause, she forgot it all in this allusion, thus surprised from her, as to her brother's fate. A sort of convulsive sigh prevented her from going on, till at length she added :

“No : no one felt for us under this mournful event more than you, Mr. De Clifford; and yet your interest about us has produced calamity to yourself; wounds to your person, and unhappiness, it should seem, to your mind. Whatever you have fancied as to changes, which circumstances, I think, might account for, do you think we can see this with indifference, or let you part from us, as you say you think it right to do, for ever, with coldness? No; as we never can forget whose friend you originally were in the family, or the sympathy you have shewn us on his loss, so we shall ever be interested in your prosperity, and ever happy to hear of it. More I cannot say.”

At this she again took up the volume I had restored to her, looked at it with emotion, and turned from me, evidently to hide and recover from the effect of her feelings.

I was deeply affected; nevertheless, there were parts of this speech in which caution seemed so studiously united with kindness, that I was left without a hope to rest upon, that I ever had been or could be any thing to her, though she was still every thing to me. The little proofs of tenderness she shewed on taking back the book, proceeded evidently from her goodness, and the surprise occasioned by the sight and return of her present,—which, pleased as I was to observe her emotion, I did not fail to remark she accepted without remonstrance or opposition. Her reasoning, too, on the expression of my feelings, was cool and without any disturbance. She was sorry that in my weak state I should leave them, but took no pains, or, at least, was not desirous, to delay my departure. In fact, she took me at my word. Upon the whole, it was evident that I was nothing to her, and I felt accordingly.

I endeavoured to speak, but my heart was too full. Yet, after the interest she had expressed, I could not leave her coldly; and I had

no other opportunity to bid her farewell as I wished. I was already on the threshold, and had begun to retreat in silence, but turned and perceived she had thrown herself into a chair, and was leaning her cheek on her hand, as if reflecting on every thing that had passed, certainly not as if it had been indifferent, but with most entire acquiescence, and with no expectancy that the conversation should be renewed.

Though much moved, I had no wish to interrupt this state. I saw that with whatever friendly feeling Bertha might have regarded me, she could part, at least, with all the demonstration of it the moment a suspicion arose that I loved her; and that suspicion, spite of the excuses made for delirium, had now got possession of her mind. Hence her cool decision of purpose, though at the expense of no inconsiderable degree of that exquisite feeling which, though always united with firmness, was her characteristic.

Thoroughly impressed with these truths, I governed myself accordingly in the farewell I still wished to take of her.

“I cannot leave you, Miss Hastings,” said I, “after all the condescending things you have just uttered, without at least thanking you for them. Very sweet will their recollection be, whatever may become of me. In struggle, in misfortune, in poverty, in obscurity, or in a prosperous career, should Heaven so will it, the remembrance of your virtues, of your sweetness—and may I not add, the hope of your goodwill—will cheer me on my road through the world, though I may never see you again. Ought I ever indeed to wish to do so, even could I suppose myself welcome, or return to a spot, where I am a supposed object of pity? No; the golden days of my life are over, never to return; nor would Miss Hastings herself wish me to regret leaving a place which, though I once thought it heaven, is heaven no longer. Alas! it is too clear that Foljambe Park is now no place for a comparative outcast.”

Bertha started at these words, and shewed evident distress in her countenance, waving her hand as if she wished me to desist from such a strain, so I only added, “It is, however, to you, a place of happiness. May you ever be, as you are, its ornament and its pride, the solace and support of your excellent parent, and the dispenser of blessings to all around you!”

I could go no farther; my unfeigned and unbounded respect, as well as love for her, quite unmanned me, in thus hopelessly leaving her; and I am ashamed to say, that while emulating the firmness of a philosopher, I shewed the weakness of a woman.

Bertha perceived it, though having covered her face with her hand, I had no power to observe what her own feelings were, except that a deep and hysterical sob, which fell on my ear as I left the summer-house, shewed that, though I was willingly allowed to depart, it was not without sympathy.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I RETURN TO OXFORD.—ITS ALTERED ASPECT.

He's full of alteration and self-reproving.

SHAKESPEARE.—*King Lear*.

I HAVE so little pleasure in commemorating the remaining hours which I spent at Foljambe Park previous to returning to Oxford, that I hastily pass them over. It is almost sufficient to say, that after my mournful parting with Bertha, I saw her no more.

When two persons lay themselves out to avoid one another, the chances are strong that they do not meet. Hence, Bertha remaining all the rest of the day in her chamber, and I either in the lower rooms or out of doors, we pretty well provided against encountering again till dinner. For my own part, I marked this as another proof of her newly-assumed distant behaviour ; and this was only confirmed when we assembled for dinner—I mean Granville and I, with Mr. Darling, the clergyman of the parish ; for Mr. Hastings coming in, with an anxious countenance, and somewhat solemn step, observed, he was sorry we must dine without his daughter, for she was far from well.

This cast a gloom upon us all ; though I own, at first, I was by no means certain whether the illness was not assumed, in order to avoid the exhibition of a consciousness which might be unpleasant. But Bertha was no dissembler, and when Mrs. Margaret, in answer to inquiries as to what she would like sent her, brought down word that she declined eating any thing, and would only take some tea, I began not only to believe, but to be alarmed ; nor was my anxiety diminished, when, after dinner, Mr. Hastings leaving the bottle, which was seldom his custom, for Granville to administer, passed up stairs and did not return.

A sort of gloomy abstraction ensued ; Granville was serious, I uneasy and involved in considerations of the future, and Mr. Darling, after being reduced to bestow himself upon the wine and fruit, thinking he was in the way, called for his horse, and jogged quietly home.

The evening passed off heavily, and I was any thing but cheerful. Indeed, the house was itself a house of mourning, and little able to bear any new uneasiness ; the night, therefore, was not happy.

The next morning, however, which I had fixed for my departure, gave better tidings of Bertha, though she still kept her chamber,—whether from design or inability to leave it, I could not tell ; and I took leave of Mr. Hastings alone. He had graciously ordered his

chariot and four to take me to York; I stept into it with tolerable alacrity; and when it drove from the door, I seemed to turn my back upon all that was worth living for in the world.

Sad and serious were my reflections during my too-long journey; for not foreseeing how necessary it was to get as quickly over the ground as possible, I had embarrassed myself with a horse at York, most mistakenly preferring solitary meditation in a slow journey back to Oxford, to the rapid mail-coach just then established, with the company of inquisitive strangers. Nevertheless, I behaved manfully, and did not scruple to look my position full in the face. What gave me most hope of myself was, that, however hurt and wounded in pride, I could not blame Bertha. I thought she had behaved with perfect propriety, and doing her this justice gave me consolation.

As I approached Oxford, however, and contemplated the new life I was evidently to lead there, never before or since did that interesting place appear so dismal. I perceived that my mind was jaundiced. Beautiful as Oxford still was, the associations which give to its beauty its principal charm were now wanting. I no longer thought of it as the abode of science, of genius, of an inexhaustible mine of learning, the haunt of cultivated spirits, holding their arms open to myself to become one of them; but as a mere place of exile for a given time, though from what country I knew not, because to what country I myself belonged I could not tell. Even Maudlin Tower, once as I thought an emblem of tranquillity, no longer had charms for me. I passed it without being conscious of its existence, far less of its beauty.

What made me almost angry was, the happy air of content, inspired by peace and leisure, which the town and colleges seemed to wear, although it was night. All the buildings appeared illuminated, yet there was no noise or bustle; for the lights proceeded—or seemed with a little imagination to do so—from the quiet lamps of study. Their inmates, thought I, have very different mistresses from mine; the Muses seldom refuse the worship of those who court them. I have played them truant, but perhaps they will receive me again.

Such meditation had employed me from the time I reached what Pope calls “the gloomy verdure of Stonour;” for I recollected his picturesque journey to Oxford, which, like myself, he approached, “overtaken by the solemn light of the moon, without company, or any interruption to the range of his own thoughts.” I experienced, also, the same surprise that he did, when, about half a mile from the city, all the bells tolled in different notes, the clocks of every college answering one another, and sounding (some in a deeper, some in a softer tone) that it was eleven at night.

Having put up my horse, I proceeded with a heavy heart to Queen’s, and gave but a sullen knock at the ponderous gate. The porter seemed in a state of happy drowsiness, which I almost, or

quite, envied. He had no care but to open and shut. He knew nothing of refinement, and least of all of a refined and misplaced passion. He was low and alone in the world, and content to be so. He seemed, however, glad, as well as surprised, to see me, and told me "Muster Fothergill would be main glad too."

What fears did not this name inspire ! I expected to be severely catechised, and almost wished for a tutor who was content with Greek lectures, without troubling himself with those on the heart. However, I had leisure enough to think all these things over during the night. My friend, the porter, had furnished me with a lanthorn, and I let myself into my room ; but bed never looked so little inviting, and in the recess of an armed-chair I lost myself in no very comfortable state for several hours. He must, however, be a wretch indeed, who frightens away his soft nurse during a whole night. Accordingly, when I waked in the morning, I found myself in my bed, after something like refreshment and wiser thoughts had taken possession of me. The pang at leaving Foljambe Park had done its worst. I had formed stern resolutions, not the less deeply fixed because I had given way to natural feeling in the first moments of parting ; and I began to have less fear of the meeting with Fothergill.

As I had acquainted him with my accident, he very kindly waived the ceremony of my waiting upon him, and, on learning my arrival, came to see me in my rooms ; then, having ascertained that there was scarcely any inconvenience remaining from my wounds, he proceeded at once to the subject which he supposed was uppermost with me. I concealed nothing ; but told him all I had observed that had raised my ideas of Bertha's character ; but, at the same time, all that had fixed my conviction from herself, that to continue to love her would be vain.

"How do you feel towards her ?" asked he. "Are you angry ?"

"No."

"Is she in danger of losing the character she has gained with you ?"

"No."

"Do you yet hate her ?"

"Oh, no. Though she has been more distant to me than I thought she could be, I shall ever look upon her as unequalled among women, in every charm and every virtue."

"I have hopes of you," said Fothergill, "but I shall watch you. I will have no lone walks, much less at midnight ; though I think the lesson you received upon that sort of romance will save a repetition of it for some time to come."

We then conferred on our plan of operations as to academical pursuits, and he opened to me a view he had kindly fostered for my benefit : this was, to stand at the next election for a Demy at Maudlin.

“If you are once cured of your love of any females but the Muses,” said he, “the disposition you have shewn for literature, and a little interest, may, I think, insure your success, and you may then literally pursue the early footsteps of your favourite Addison.”

The thought gave me a pleasure that I could not—indeed did not try to conceal. It lighted up my countenance, and, in fact, was the first sensible excitement to ambition which I had hitherto felt.

“You do not seem averse to my scheme,” said Fothergill, “and I hail it for more causes than one. Addison, you know, was not only distinguished as the most polite of our scholars, but became secretary of state. With such an example before you, how soon will not the love of a boy sink before the ambition of a man?”

“Is then ambition incompatible with love?”

“It should seem that at least it should be made of sterner stuff. Recollect de La Rochefoucauld :—‘*On passe souvent de l’amour à l’ambition, mais on ne revient guère de l’ambition à l’amour* :’ and if, as ambition did with Addison, it lead you into politics and party, instead of sinking you into a country parson (which is only another word for a lover), you will soon be independent of the whole house of Hastings.”

“I should not wish to forget them,” said I.

“I should not like you if you did,” replied he ; “but if you succeed in the career I have proposed—if, as is in your power, you become eminent as a scholar, and through scholarship, an eminent public man—you may force the family to respect you, as if you were their equal ; and Bertha herself, though she may not return your love, may feel a pride and a pleasure in the thought that you have been her lover.”

How well did this observing man understand the springs of human action. He knew that he was taking me by my weak side. He saw that the bait had succeeded. I shewed it in the smile that played round my lips. For the first time, I began to think that the church was not the only career open to a decayed gentleman, and that there were other parties than those of Athens and Rome. In short, the precedent of Addison, who had thrown off at Queen’s, proceeded to Maudlin, and thence into the first ranks of society, had all the weight with me which my tutor intended.

I told him I was impatient to begin. He smiled at my haste, but thought it augured well. “Enthusiasm in love,” he observed, “too often makes a man a fool : in ambition, no one can be a hero without it.”

To be sure, the superstructure which Fothergill was thus endeavouring to raise seemed to have but slight foundations ; nevertheless, he was not without his reasons, which may hereafter be developed.

This conversation put me in spirits. I braced myself up to exer-

tion; I strove for college honours, and succeeded; and, on the strength of it, was introduced to the influential people at Maudlin, where Fothergill's universal reputation did much for me. In short, within a twelvemonth after the eventful visit to Foljambe Park, my first ambition was crowned, and the "decayed gentleman," with a fair proportion of *éclat*, became a Demy of Maudlin.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PROGRESS OF INDOLENCE—HISTORY OF SIR SIMON SAUNTER.

Ten thousand harms more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Antony and Cleopatra*.

IT must be owned that I have passed quickly over the ground in this part of my history; but as the life of a student is little interesting to any one but himself, I have nothing to do, in this part of it, but to report progress, and ask leave to sit again. Nevertheless, there was one interval, of sadness indeed, but which at least occasioned a variety; so I am bound to record it.

The conquest over my affections was not accomplished either soon, or without considerable interruptions in my efforts to succeed. At one time, it not only cost me a severe illness, which fell in the shape of a fever on my spirits, but went far towards a seemingly total change in my character. For whether the perpetual effort and struggle which I had to endure relaxed my energies, so that they could not recover their elasticity, or that my loss of hope in love made me despair of every other hope, there were times when no object seemed worth pursuing, and the vision with which Fothergill had dazzled me was sometimes obscured in

"Cloud instead, and ever-during dark."

At one time, after a long, most laborious, and exhausting fit of study, which perhaps caused much consequent weakness, I fell as it were into helplessness, and not only became dead to all power of exertion, but an actual sloth, both in body and mind. I shirked all the discipline of the college, on the score of illness; if I opened a book, I could not proceed with it; I postponed all business; made promises, only to break them; procrastinated in every thing, succeeded in nothing. In short, for near two months, exertion seemed to kill me; I was even ingenious in excuses to avoid it; and though Fothergill became bitter in his reproaches, and even threatened to abandon me, my indolence seemed insuperable. He however, took a way peculiar to himself to cure me of it.

While real disease seemed to consume me, he made no effort to reason on these its dangerous effects, but called in the aid of medicine and kindness to restore me. But when this had in a great measure succeeded, and he observed me a willing prey to mental bitterness, rather than bodily weakness, he changed his battery, and as soon as he found I was capable of being reasoned with, did not fail to set before me the disgrace and misery I was preparing for myself in all time to come.

At first I only felt annoyed, and allowed him to preach ; but by degrees I began to argue with him, which he sagaciously hailed as an omen of improvement in my condition. He was, as the reader knows, keenly observant of manners and intellectual habits ; a man of maxims and illustrations, and always ready with examples, drawn from real life, in support of his theories. Of these I have already given not a few instances, extracted from what (as I have related) he called his book of human nature ; and I, perhaps, have been thus particular, in order that I may record another not unamusing picture, which he had long before drawn, of the mischiefs of indolence.

This, by way of practical support to his argument, finding I could bear it, he desired to set before me. The impression it made was deep and beneficial, and in fact went further to restore me than a whole volume of sermons.

It was after having given some indication of a power and disposition to enter into his reasoning upon the mischiefs which my new character, as he called it, was brewing for myself, that Fothergill produced the sketch he had some years before made, of an old friend, then no more, by name Sir Simeon Saunter. They had been under graduates together at Queen's, and the picture which he had drawn of him was dramatic.

Their friendship began by a convenient prompt, which Fothergill gave Sir Simeon at lecture. Not that his scholarship was mean ; though how he came to be a scholar at all, who scarcely ever would open a book till forced, moved everybody's wonder. If he read, it was in bed in a morning, from which no college punishment could ever move him, till eleven or twelve o'clock ; so that he generally passed his time as a prisoner, under an arrear of impositions. No man deserved his name so well, for he spent the whole day in sauntering from one room to another, as if in search of what he could never find ; " reminding us in this," said Fothergill, " of what was observed of the old Duke of Newcastle, who, having lost an hour in the morning, seemed to be running after it all the rest of the day." With all this he was so good-natured and well-principled that everybody liked him, though esteem was often withheld, from the consequences of this his besetting sin.

" It was several years," said Fothergill in his manuscript, " after Sir Simeon had done with college, or rather college with him (for

in truth he was rusticated for indolence, and never returned to us), before I saw him again; though he once did muster up exertion enough to write me a letter, telling me that to avoid the bustle of the world, for which at *thirty* he found he was unfit, he had retired to what he called a Sabine farm he had in the county of Surry.

When I did see him it was under most appropriate circumstances. It had been my custom, after having been a long time together engaged in tuition, to give myself little relaxations, by excursions to London or elsewhere, as humour or the season prompted. In one of these to the metropolis, after having made the tour of the theatres, concerts, and all other exhibitions, I had pretty nearly taken my fill of them, and began again to think of more serious employments, when one morning, or rather afternoon, walking in the park, I beheld a man more than half asleep on one of the benches. By his dress he appeared a gentleman, and from his features, in which there was a remarkable quietness, though his eyes were closed, I thought I knew him; but when he waked and rose soon afterwards, the slouch in his walk assured me he could be no other than my old college acquaintance, Sir Simeon.

When I made myself known to him, he shewed as much pleasure as a man of his habitual immoveableness could do, and after mutual greetings and inquiries, I found he had as usual got tired of himself, and was under great difficulty to know how to dispose of his enemy, time.

“And yet,” said I, “there is no want of means in this plaguy pleasant place, London; though the advance of the summer might beckon you to your Sabine farm——”

“O! name it not,” said he, “or if you do, call it by its right name, Monotony Hall. I fled from it for variety’s sake, but am sorry to say the extreme of variety here is worse than the absence of it there.”

“What think you,” asked I, “of a good long tour, at home or abroad, and afterwards publishing your journal? You might disport yourself in first visiting, and then describing, either cities or deserts; things animate or inanimate; emperors, ministers, and beautiful duchesses; or rocks, rivers, and forests. This would force exertion—which is all you want.”

“Exertion!” exclaimed he, “It is a consummation devoutly to ——”

He could not even finish the line, but with a significant toss of his chin, and a long protracted yawn, gave me to understand it was a happiness beyond his power.

“For what could I propose to myself,” said he, “in a tour, shut up in a close carriage, because I cannot bear an open one, or lounging in the cabin of a packet-boat, because I get tired of the bustle upon deck? What could I derive from poring over a book

of roads, or at best a view by others of the countries I came to visit myself? Then as to a journal of what I saw—delightful in the contemplation—impossible in the execution! I attempted it once, but was so occupied with the description, that I scarce ever saw what I was describing.”

“Well, then,” said I, “if you cannot journalize what you see, record what you think. The record of a man’s mind may be still more interesting than what he sees.”

“Ah!” returned he, “I have tried that too, to relieve the flatness of solitude in my Sabine farm, as you call it, but soon grew so much ashamed of myself that I discontinued it. It was like Prince Darling’s ring; it pricked my finger so, that I broke it all to pieces, and threw the fragments into the fire.”

At this he seemed embarrassed, and even blushed, especially when I said, perhaps a little unfeelingly,

“If this is the case, I am afraid I have no hope for you.”

To encourage him, however, I alluded to his *professed* love of literature, and asked him why he did not continue a resource so never-failing.

“Why, there again,” replied he, “I have the curse of indolence; a fortune just enough to indulge, but not enough to cure it. If I were again at school, and afraid of a flogging, I might again read. Afraid of nobody but myself, I am so extremely good-natured, or perhaps so little disposed to the trouble of correcting my faults, that I forgive them, and even, I fear, like them too well to part with them. However, do you know I am all the better for this confession? I feel roused by it, and had I such a friend as you always at my elbow, I really believe I might do something. For example, if you would come and see, or rather reside with me during a vacation, I might perhaps recover a taste for reading, and not let it evaporate as I do in newspapers and magazines; though they also are now so confoundedly deep and reflective, that it requires exertion to keep pace even with *them*. What say you to it?” added he, brightening. “If your time is not engaged, will you accept my proposal, and go home with me to-morrow?”

“I might have many worse offers,” answered I, though with hesitation.

“Then why not say yes?” added he, and the thought itself kindled something like activity in his countenance and manner.

I asked for time to consider; and promising him an answer the next day, we separated.

On my return home to my lodgings in the King’s Road, the nursery-gardens smelt and looked so sweet, and the daisies and lilacs seemed so much what they have been called, the lovely harbingers of spring, that they very much seconded the invitation of Sir Simeon. I had, in fact, had enough of liberty, and, perhaps, fear-

ing I might grow too much like Sir Simeon himself, I resolved to accept his proposal.

He was overjoyed when I told him so; began that instant to pack up his trunks; and, spite of the remonstrances of John, his man—to whom, in general, to save trouble, I found he allowed a most absolute sway over his movements—he resolved we should set off the next day.

This John (whom in time I learned to call Saunter's governor, from his lecturing him pretty freely upon whatever did not please John himself), earnestly opposed his going home.

“You are never happy there,” said he, “nor well neither: I always say it does not suit you, though I cannot well tell what does—for you never shoot, you never go to sizes, nor even to races; and though so close to Brighton, you are afraid of meeting the prince, or the east wind. You lose money by farming; we can seldom get you on horseback, though you gave Lady Norton fifty guineas for her pad because she said it was too quiet for her; and you hate visitors like poison. I always say a country life does not suit you, and so this here gentleman, who has persuaded you to go back, will find when he gets to the Hermitage.”

It was in vain I protested to Mr. John, that I had really no share in the movement; that it was his master's own resolution, who, I supposed, knew best what best agreed with him.

“No he don't though,” replied the valet governor, “and you may soon find that out if you come along with us. People as has nothing to do but eat their dinners never know how to please themselves in that even, let alone other things. I think it a little odd you should know master better than me, who have served him ten years; however, I suppose we must go, and so I won't take no more trouble about it.”

This was said with a mixture of huffishness with good-nature, and being wholly unchecked by his master, I found the latter was in one of those domestic dilemmas from which few can deliver themselves—that of being governed by his servant. I was only fearful that Mr. John would consider and therefore hate me, as a rival—which might disturb my quiet at the Hermitage, to which I had begun to look forward with some pleasure.

However, I left my friend fully resolved upon the plan he had proposed, and preparing to think instantly of a scheme for our studies, in which, if he had but such a companion, he said, as I, he was sure he should make great progress.

The next day we set off for Surry; and upon our arrival at the end of the private way to the house, out of the high road to Ryegate, near which it was situated, we were stopped some time by the gate, which, instead of being erect, lay flat across the entrance—in fact, torn from its remaining hinge, the other having long been

broken, without being renewed. This produced an actual scold (a bold exertion) from Sir Simeon to John.

“Have I not often told you,” said he, “to get that unfortunate gate mended?”

“Yes!” replied John, “but you as often told me not to do it, for you wanted an alteration, and would plan it yourself, which you never did.”

Sir Simeon was dumb.

Having got over the interruption, we arrived at the house, which, though originally comfortable, was in a most neglected state. Several of the windows had been broken, and the panes replaced with oiled paper, which having again been blown in by the wind, was now flapping about in most comfortless disorder. The whole front seemed to have been a stranger to paint for several years, and the frames of the windows and doors exhibited not a few symptoms of dry-rot.

Had my friend been a miser, which he was not, I should have set this down to niggardliness. But I soon discovered that it arose from the same source as all his other faults—procrastination. He confessed that he had *designed* a *thorough* repair for several years, and it was not therefore worth while to be troubled with a partial one; all was to be done at once. This he deferred till he should settle at what watering place he should pass the summer, while the repair was to be done in his absence; but as this never *was* settled, and he never had been absent, all remained as it was.

On entering the house, I discovered that John was not the only domestic who assumed a right to regulate the conduct of the master. We were met on the steps by a tall, well-made, comely woman, with a quick eye and very active manner, with a letter in her hand which she seemed only just to have received. Not in the least minding me, she accosted her master (brandishing the letter at him) with—

“This is so like you, Sir Simeon, not to give one the least notice of your meaning to return, till you come yourself, all of a jerk. I have only this moment received your letter, and if it had been written a week ago it would have been no more than was right, to get the house in order, it is in such a pickle. And as for the strange gentleman (looking at me), I don’t know where to put him, for I was resolved to have the painters in the blue chamber, to keep it from perishing.”

I own I was surprised at such a lecture from a housekeeper to her master, and not less at the quiescence with which he took it.

“Well,” said he, “Mary, do not be angry, that’s a good woman, but take it quietly; and I dare say we shall do very well, if you will only be good-humoured and exert yourself.”

At this Mrs. Mary, with rather a suppressed laugh, between a

smile and a sneer, retired across the hall, muttering pretty audibly, "Exert myself! Yes! I needs must, for *you* never do;"—and with this she vanished to give directions to her maids.

This was to me quite a new scene, but I was sorry to see it fretted my friend, who was even abashed when he led the way into a parlour that was quite dark from the shutters not yet having been opened; nor was he consoled by Mrs. Mary's returning to perform that duty, and observing in rather a rallying tone,

"Ah! like master like man, as the saying is. No wonder we are all lazy in this house."

This, however, was qualified by a good-humoured and really taking smile (for she was extremely well-looking), as if to make up to her master for the brusquerie of her reception of him.

This smile restored the peace which I feared might have been broken, not by Sir Simeon, who exhibited much patience, but by the handsome housekeeper, who seemed to be quite sensible of the power which her beauty, or her management, or both, gave her over her chief.

Well, the room was at last set in order, and a question was made about dinner.

"What can you give us, Mary?" asked Sir Simeon coaxingly.

"Give you!" quoth the lady, resuming something of her flippancy, "what can you expect? When people come without notice, they must only look for pot-luck, as the saying is. There is nothing in the house but cold meat, and eggs and bacon, and it is too late to send to Ryegate to the butcher's."

Sir Simeon looked at me inquiringly, and I thought it right, in a tone which, had it been to a duchess, could not have been more civil, to assure Mrs. Mary that nothing could be more agreeable to my taste than what she had proposed, particularly accompanied as it was with so much neatness, and such a kind welcome as she had shewn.

This drew another smile from the *concierge*, who even dropt me a courtesy, said I was very polite, and she would endeavour to find me a comfortable room, though the blue one was, as she observed, all, she did not know how.

"She is a good creature," said Sir Simeon, as she left the room, "only a little touchy now and then, when she is put out, as it must be owned she has been by so sudden an arrival."

To this I assented, and my friend, to pass the time while dinner was getting ready, proposed to shew me his garden. Here was wild work; it was indeed "unweeded, and grown to seed;" nettles and thistles in as much or more abundance than coleworts or cauliflowers. The roses were stifled by field poppies, and the sweet violet by quitch-grass. The walks, too, which had once been gravel, were entirely covered and wet with moss; yet there were two men

and a boy apparently at work, and Sir Simeon told me he was passionately fond of gardens. What is more, I really believe he was so, but it was of those which

‘Live in description, and look green in song.’

In fact, I observed, in the course of a very few days, that the passion was solely in the imagination, which indeed allowed him charmingly to lounge on a sofa, and drink the pages of Virgil and De Lisle, without troubling himself with spades or pruning-knives. To bestir himself personally, or do more than express a wish (for he scarcely ever reached the energy of an order, and that was always through his prime minister John), was far beyond his power.

“It is sad,” said he, on seeing that I observed the desolation, “to think how my people treat me. Day after day have I ordered these beds to be trimmed—for the epithet of trim belongs appropriately to a garden—and yet you see what a state it is in. That gap, too, in the quickset, through which those confounded fowls, and even sheep, enter when they please, I have ordered ten times to be mended, yet it is not done.”

“Did you speak to the gardener yourself?” asked I.

“No! but I sent him a good scold by John.”

“Which perhaps was never delivered.”

Sir Simeon turned a little red, but presently said, “Well, my good friend, I am glad, however, that you are with me. We will now keep things in order; the first step to which is, I own, to keep me in order myself; which, though no easy matter, perhaps you will kindly undertake.”

Pleased with this candour, I told him not to despair, as the first step to cure a fault was to be sensible of its existence.

“Ah!” said he, with a sort of uneasiness in his look, “that is very well in theory, and I have told myself so fifty times, till, by dint of confessing, I have got so used to it, that my conscience is no longer pricked. I begin even to compound with the disease, and think it not altogether fatal, though dangerous. But,” added he, with his usual fondness for Horace, “I never was one of those

—Quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum

Collegisse juvat¹.”

I am content, nay, seem to have bargained, to leave this to your more active spirits, provided you leave me in my turn

‘Stratus nunc ad aquæ lene caput sacræ².’”

“I perceive,” said I, “your taste for Horace has not left you.

¹ “Whom it delights

In clouds th’ Olympic dust to roll.”—*Francis’ Horace*.

² “At some soft flowing fountain’s head,

Or in the shade his limbs are spread.”—*Id.*

and he will, no doubt, make part of our readings together. I suppose you have matured the plan for our studies, which you said it would be such a pleasure to you *instantly* to arrange."

He smiled again at his own procrastination, but, like most procrastinators, had a reason for it.

"Why, I did think of it," said he, "and fell asleep with meditating upon it yesterday after dinner; but who can arrange a plan of study at an hotel in a tumultuous town? so I thought I would defer it till we got down here, where, too, I might have the benefit of your assistance."

"You are sure," said I, "you thought of all this?"

"Quite sure," replied he; but all further discussion was put an end to by Mr. John's advancing on the walk, to announce that dinner was on the table, and to ask what wine he should put out.

"I think we will have the old hockheim," answered Sir Simeon.

"I think not," said Mr. John; "you know it always gripes you."

"Well, but Mr. Fothergill might like it," observed his master, arguing the matter.

"It's very expensive," replied John; "and I thought the gentleman was your intimate friend. I think port might do."

"Confound your impudence," retorted his master, now roused to real anger, and looking very red. "You abuse my indulgence, sirrah! and I will certainly do what I have often said—dismiss you my service."

"I don't think you will," muttered John, *sotto voce*, and as if to himself, but so as to be heard.

"There it is," observed my friend, cooling, as John got out of sight; "the rascal believes, what I am afraid is true, that I cannot do without him, and takes liberties upon it."

"And Mrs. Mary," said I, rather perhaps too significantly, for I perceived he did not like it, and I was sorry to think it might spoil the digestion of a good dinner, one of the great helps to which, as is held by all dietetic doctors, is good humour.

When we entered the dining-room we found the aforesaid Mrs. Mary, who had arrayed herself in a silk gown, standing at the head of the table, with a carving-knife and fork in her hands, and preparing to do the office it indicated for her master. This, I saw, annoyed him, for he actually frowned at her, as he said,

"Not now, Mrs. Quickly; you see I have company, and I suppose we can carve for ourselves without troubling you."

"You never do so, by yourself," replied the lady, "and I thought you would want me; but do as you please—I see I am not wished for."

And she flounced out of the room in something very like a passion.

For my part, I did not know what to think of these exhibitions, and feared downright rebellion in the two real managers of the

house, for it was plain the master did not manage it himself ; so, to conciliate peace, I begged that he would make no alteration in his usual table habits on my account.

“ If Mrs. Mary has been accustomed,” said I, “ to ——.”

“ O ! dear, no ! ” he replied, pretty briskly (though I could see Mr. John turn his head to the sideboard to conceal a laugh), “ I would never permit such a thing as a regular custom ; only as Mary is an excellent carver, and I own I like to have things done for me, besides being a very bad carver myself, she sometimes, when quite alone ——”

“ Sits down with you, I suppose,” interrupted I, observing that there was actually a third plate laid at the table ; “ and I beg to say I shall be distressed ——”

“ You are quite wrong,” interrupted he in his turn, as if piqued, and mustering a tone of courage ; “ she is my servant, but not my companion, though certainly often of great use to a man who is an invalid, lives so much alone, and ——”

What he was going to add, I was prevented from knowing, by a violent fit of sneezing which seized Mr. John at the sideboard, unfortunately, so like a laugh, that his master was annoyed at it ; the prudent domestic, however, diverted it by saying,

“ Indeed, Sir Simeon, you and the gentleman had better eat your dinners ; the eggs be already cold, and you may tell him all about Mary afterwards.”

I thought this motion so proper, that I seconded it, and Sir Simeon shewing no disposition to keep up the subject, we began to attack the dinner in good earnest. The eggs were soon dispatched, as well as a cold shoulder of lamb, which Mrs. Mary had intended for her private eating, and the hock proving excellent, we did not refrain, on account of the expense which had occasioned John’s regrets, from doing it ample justice.

After this was dispatched, Sir Simeon proposed coffee, “ which Mary,” said he, “ makes admirably, and generally pours it out herself, let who will be here ; so, as she is seemingly proud of it, I like to indulge her. I hope you have no objection.”

Whether I had or not would have signified little, for the rustling of her silk gown announced that Mrs. Mary was at the door, and she entered, coffee in hand, observing, rather briskly, that we ought to drink it directly, or it would get cold, and that nothing was so bad as cold coffee. She set us, indeed, an example of her sincerity in what she preached, by taking a cup herself, for there were three on the board.

Seeing my friend again a little embarrassed, I did not seem to remark this, but began to treat Mrs. Mary as one of the company, to which she plainly seemed to think herself entitled ; and as I saw Sir Simeon was puzzled how to behave upon it, I directed some

civilities to her, which had so good an effect, that when she rose to leave us she said she was glad that *Sir Simeon* (for she did not call him master) had brought down so agreeable a gentleman with him as a companion, "which I always told him," added she "was all he wanted."

I now began to see plainly that my friend, with all his mental acquirements, was in a state of absolute pupillage to both his servants; a degradation of which it was doubtful whether he was even ashamed, but which, at all events, it was evident he could not break through; and I own I was much struck to think of such vicissitudes in the history of human nature. Here was a man of birth, fortune, and education, and a mind by no means incapable of enjoying them, reduced to absolutely worse than a cypher, from the sheer indulgence of constitutional indolence.

This phenomenon, for such it seemed, though it only broke upon me by degrees in the course of the evening, was demonstrated the next day, in still greater clearness, when *Sir Simeon* very candidly lamented his case to me, and put it to my friendship to extricate him from what he called this domestic tyranny.

To try him, I said he ought to marry.

"Why, no," said he, with some awkwardness of look; "there are many things which make that impossible."

I asked what? but all I could get from him was the trouble it would cost to court a woman proper for him in the eye of the world; not to mention that the tyranny of a wife would be worse than that of a servant.

"The one," added he, with something resembling firmness, "I may discharge."

"If you dare, or have the power," observed I, at which he reddened, and gave a deep sigh. "Come," I continued, really feeling for his embarrassment, "I see how it is; you would rather bear the ills you have, than fly to others which you know not of."

"Thank you, thank you," said he; "I believe that is the true secret. I can bear with these people, because, knowing that they are not my equals, I think I can assert myself when I please; but not so if I married a woman of family, who would always be standing on her rights, and would browbeat me out of my life, if only to assert them. Besides, I must own, what I dare say you have already discovered, that from being so early my own master in the world, I have indulged my constitutional indolence and indecision till I am unfit for it, or almost to live with any companions but those you see."

To encourage him, I told him that he who knew his own disease so well had made the first step towards recovery.

He hesitated awhile, but then opening a drawer, he said,

"Alas! I fear recovery is hopeless, and you will probably say so

too when you have perused this. I told you I had sometimes, in very want of other employment, undertaken a journal, which, from shame, I almost always destroyed as soon as written. This little record of only one month of my useless life is the only one that has escaped, and will prove to you how vain to me have been all the adventitious gifts of what men call good fortune, and how much the lowest menial of my house, while he perhaps envies my lot, might be himself the object of envy to his master."

At these words he put into my hands a small roll of paper. "I give it you," said he, "as my mental case, and as, if it were a bodily one, I would give it my physician. But our minds, perhaps, want physicians even more than our bodies. I feel that your presence here has already done me good."

I thanked him for this confidence, and was proceeding to read, when, with his usual disposition to procrastinate, he said,

"No; not now: by-and-by, if you please. To-night, to-morrow, or next-day, will do quite as well. Besides, the post is just arrived with the daily and weekly papers; and—thanks to the confounded energies of the press—merely to read, much more to digest, requires no small consumption of time; but, in short, it is the only reading I venture upon."

"Well," said I, rather anxious to peruse the journal, which I thought would interest my love of exploring character, "you shall not balk the fit while upon you; your arm-chair and desk, I see, court you, and while you settle the politics of Europe, I——"

"I hate all the political part of a newspaper," interrupted he, "and always skip it, or lay it by for a more convenient time."

"Which time," said I, "never comes."

"Not far wrong there," replied he. "In truth, discussion bores me; the cloudiness of the times alarms me; the weakness of our governors does not assure me; and the scurrility of parties disgusts me."

"For heaven's sake, then," asked I, "what part of a newspaper *does* occupy you?"

"O! a great deal of it," answered he. "The advertisements, all of which I ponder, not only amuse, but instruct me in all that is really going on in trade, the arts, literature, and science, better than all the most elaborate leading articles, which are generally false estimates of every thing, every man, and every transaction of life. Then there are the deaths, births, and marriages; and the police reports, which give a truer history of the animal called man than all the columns of all the patriots, economists, and political philosophers put together."

I could not help smiling at this ingenuity of defence in excusing himself from every semblance of exertion, even in reading a newspaper; but wishing to examine what I thought would be a

rich curiosity, his journal, without the restraint of his presence, I said I would retire with it to my own room, and leave him to investigate the increase or decrease of our population in the deaths and marriages, and the history of man in the records of Bow Street.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MISCHIEFS OF INDOLENCE.—DANGERS OF INTERFERING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS.

Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do, and dares better be damn'd than do t?

SHAKSPEARE.—*All's Well that Ends Well.*

MY own experience often makes me pity any sincere man who undertakes to record the operations of his own mind in its every day dress. For whatever the virtue or ability of the journalist, ten thousand to one, if he be honest, his pages will depict a great deal of weakness, a great deal of vanity, or a great deal of folly. What good did the historian of his own heart, or of his own actions, ever do, except amuse the world by making them laugh at him; or instruct them to avoid, by making them hate his faults?

Do we want proofs of this? Search the memoirs of Montpensier and Madame Roland, who are so good as to reveal their personal charms to the world; or Rousseau, who revealed all his vices; or Laud, who revealed his secret superstition; or Doddington, who seemed to boast of his venality; or Watson, or Cumberland, or Gilbert Wakefield, who, gifted with learning and powerful intellect, disfigured themselves with vanities—in the first two, most amusing; in the last, most disgusting¹.

O that mine enemy would write a book! was the wish of an injured man, panting for revenge. He would have improved upon it had he wished that book a journal. But if he does write one, let him have a care how he publishes it—or shews it, you will say, to a friend who will publish it for him.

Poor, dear Sir Simeon! But he is gone; and as his tranquillity cannot be disturbed, and it may do good to those who are devoutly disposed to imitate him, I will venture to tell them what they may come to. Besides, as he bequeathed me all his papers, to do what I pleased with, it is scarcely, even virtually, a breach of confidence.

¹ Nothing is here meant in derogation of the learned, the sensible, the perspicuous, the eloquent Bishop of Llandaff, whose abilities and firm integrity cannot be disparaged even by the vanity scattered up and down his memoirs. But while the divine, the schoolman, and the patriot politician may profit much by them, at that vanity they have a legitimate right to laugh.

Well ; behold me in my arm-chair above stairs, probing my friend in all his weaknesses, as laid bare by himself, with a view to be a beacon *to* himself. It is thus he begins :—

“ I know my besetting sin, and this shall be its record, in order to warn me of its mischiefs. I am, and have been long, a *slave*, from sheer impatience of restraints upon my liberty. I am cursed with a fortune which delivers me from all attention to others, all regard to forms, and all anxiety to do any thing but to please myself; and it always pleases myself to do nothing at all.

“ But I will say, in the words of a man whom I resemble in nothing but his idleness and procrastination, ‘*Desidiæ vale dixi, Syrenis istius cantibus surdum posthac aurem obversurus*’¹. If the world knew me, I am a confounded hypocrite. I am reckoned good-tempered, but it is because I am too indolent to be angry ; generous, because it is too much trouble to refuse what I am asked. But will I *take pains* to do any man good ? Alas ! no, Why, then, should I draw my own picture ?

“ But let me not answer that at present, for I only *intend* to draw it. I have already done enough, and lay aside my pen.”

This was in the very spirit of the man, and accordingly, from the dates (for he actually did put dates to his exertions), I find he did not renew his *intentions* till that day month. I then found the following entry :—

“ *Day the first.*—Received a long letter, with longer accounts, from my agent, requiring an immediate answer, which I resolved to give ; but the weather wet, cold, and comfortless. Not in spirits to write ; so put the letter on my desk, to answer it the next morning.

“ Had a fall, from the carpet being unnailed. *Mem.*—To have it nailed directly ; but John out of the way.

“ *Day the second.*—Weather the same. Unfortunately the housemaid, who is far too tidy, had put my agent’s letter out of sight, and I forgot it. Stumbled again over the carpet ; John never in the way.

“ *Day the third.*—Observed my grandfather’s picture hung awry. Got upon a chair to put it straight, but could not reach it. Looked for the steps, but they were not in the room. Steps are always out of the way. *Mem.*—To tell John about the picture as well as the carpet.

“ *Day the fourth.*—Picture still crooked ; had forgot to tell John ; looks very awkward.

“ *Day the fifth.*—Found my agent’s letter in the drawer of the inkstand. Gave me a nervous fit, and sat down to answer it ; but on looking at my watch, found the post would be gone before I

¹ A diary of Johnson quoted by Boswell :—“ I bid farewell to sloth, resolved henceforth to turn a deaf ear to her syren strains.”

could finish, so put it off till evening, when I felt too sleepy for accounts, so postponed it till morning.

“*Day the sixth.*—In excellent humour for commencing my journal, or reading, and resolved to pass the morning in the library, but found the windows shut up, and had not been opened this month. Too close and damp to sit in it.

“*N.B.*—Servants always as bad, or worse, than their masters. My letter again out of sight, and I was too much occupied with subjects of study to think of it. My grandfather not yet put straight. I wonder John’s own eyes do not see it without being told. Strange that I should always forget to tell him, as it is very offensive. Mary, however, found out the carpet, and nailed it herself without being told. A good creature that; much shocked when she heard I had had a fall.”

I was not unnaturally curious to find out what his love of study produced; but all that I got was, that his books, which had been put up promiscuously on the shelves, to save time, some months before, had never been classed, and he could not possibly read till they were. This he *resolved* (for he was always resolving) should be done by his own hand; but finding he could do it better by John’s, under his direction, and John always pleading some excuse for non-attendance (not unwillingly accepted by his master), the library and the desire of study remained *in statu quo*, as I suppose did the agent’s letter, for it never was mentioned again.

The following entry was characteristic :—

“*Wednesday morning, 9 o’clock.*—Had very little sleep, so resolved to lie a while. Broad awake, and in a reverie; yet could not tell what I was thinking of. Got up at last, but found it was eleven, so put off shaving till after breakfast. Sat in night-gown and slippers. Put on one shoe; but, taking up Shakspeare, forgot the other.

“*Resolved* to begin another journal, though so many had failed. Spread paper for that purpose. Got as far as the date, and ‘*I intend*’—but found the ink clotty and difficult to write with. Wished to ring for John to change it, but, as he was coming to take away the breakfast-things, thought I would wait. He did not come for an hour, when I had lost the thread of my reflections, and gave up the journal for that morning. Meantime I had begun to dress, but my eye having caught a view of the old church tower and the rookery, I leaned back in my chair, and fell into a charming reminiscence of old times, which lasted till John came in, and I had then forgot what I wanted.

“Felt my beard, and as it was not very rough, thought I would go without shaving; but John said he was sure Mrs. Prettyman would call about the lease of her house, as it was so fine, and we had

been so long in settling it. So I ordered the water ; but before it came (John is always confoundedly long), I had again taken up *Henry IV.*, and lost myself in Eastcheap, Shrewsbury, Gualtree Forest, and Justice Shallow, and before I had done, the stable clock struck one, and the water was cold. Servants being all gone to dinner, I did not like to disturb them for more, and walked out into the grove in my dressing-gown.

“ Weather fine, and rooks delightful. Their cawing always soothes me. Enjoyed it while sitting on the long bench under the lime tree, which smelt very sweet, and the bees would have hummed me to sleep had not John, having finished his dinner, bored me again with Mrs. Prettyman, and insisted I should shave. Felt my beard again, and not being in a humour to hold the razor myself, told him to fetch Suds the barber, though I hate his dirty fingers and bad razors. As Suds lives a quarter of a mile off, I hoped this would give me a quarter of an hour’s respite ; but in five minutes horribly alarmed by a ringing at the gate. Mrs. Prettyman going to town in her coach and four, and nobody to answer but Dolly Cook. Unfortunate that Mary was gone up to Ryegate. Should not have minded it, only Mrs. Prettyman is such a fine lady, and, to give consequence to her son, who has an eye to the county, will always travel in her coach and four. Fool enough to be ashamed, and sneaked in at the side door, but thought it needless to wash till Suds came.

“ John returned without him, for he was out. Confound them both : but as I could not keep Mrs. Prettyman waiting (for I was afraid the lease would never be signed), I was forced to appear, after all, without being shaved.

“ This was not the worst, for, unfortunately, she piques herself upon being a woman of business, and would not sign till she had heard every word of the lease read over, which—as I never can find the places in reading a lease, was no small matter. I wonder why the devil law language should be so totally different from any other.

“ Thank heaven, Mrs. Prettyman would not stay for the luncheon which John, in his officiousness, brought in upon a tray, and I was left my own master for the rest of the day ; only when Mary came in, she flew into a passion because Mrs. Prettyman called when she was out, which she said she was sure was by design.

“ N.B. The report is revived that I have views upon the rich widow. Heaven knows my innocence—but it annoys Mary, who says she supposes she will be discharged ; and there is no peace in the house when she is angry.”

This, though the record of only one morning, being a pretty accurate specimen of the manner in which my friend passed his time for a month (for he then went to London, to get rid of himself, and probably of Mrs. Mary), I do not think it necessary to record more,

except that there were not a few traces of good-nature to persons in the neighbourhood, which, for his honour, ought to be told.

I observed, however, that my friend was always more free to give money than advice; the latter requiring much more attention. He had therefore hit upon an ingenious method to indulge his indolence and good-nature at the same time;—for in all cases of country business, he had bargained with a neighbouring attorney to answer questions for him, at the rate of half-a-crown a case, which in the end proved very pretty pickings to the said attorney. I observed, too, that in cases where pecuniary assistance was to be afforded, Mrs. Mary was chiefly commissioned to proportion and distribute the bounty; which, as she had a long list of dependants and poor relations of her own, was chiefly, or entirely, confined to them. In this, too, no wonder if the caprice attributed (though so unjustly) to the sex when they have power, was sometimes apparent: at least I occasionally found such entries as these:—

“I begin to think I have given Mary too much power; indeed I fear she has too much influence over me, and abuses it. The five pounds she gave to her first cousin, twice removed, the other day, was neither necessary nor deserved, for John tells me he could maintain his family very well, but is drunken and idle, and I *hate idlers*; while the poor housemaid, whom she turned away for being, as she said, disrespectful, and too handsome for a housemaid, she refused to assist, though she supports her sick father and little brothers. I *must* take the management of this into my own hands.”

I was in hopes this would produce some kind of reform in the almonry, or at least some diminution of the housekeeper's influence. But no! the next entry was this:—

“I am terribly infatuated by this woman. When I scolded her for not carrying the three guineas to the widow towards her rent, she had the insolence to say she wanted it herself for the silk gown I had promised her, to give her a better air in my household. That was no reason for her not carrying the money to the widow. However, I believe she is attached to me, and I did certainly promise her the silk gown; and besides, any thing for a quiet life. I must send John to the widow.”

Such memorials as these, of the increasing weakness of a mind capable of good, but ruined by being totally surrendered to the besetting power of sloth, made me tremble for my friend's happiness; and, indeed, I began to fear that there were ties between him and his housekeeper, always degrading to a man who has any regard to reputation, often therefore lamentable and even irksome, and yet which even the firmest in other respects cannot always break through. I feared that this woman, who preferred her own silk gown to the relief of a poor widow, might be a mistress, nor was my fear the less that she should be a wife. Either way, my friend's

liberty, and therefore his happiness, was overthrown. I resolved to search out the secret, and if not too late, to endeavour to restore him to himself, though that might be only to a less disreputable state of vegetation.

An opportunity was not long wanting, for that very evening we took a walk, which Mrs. Mary allowed, after buttoning him up to the chin in a cloak, though the height of summer, the evening air, she said, always making him sneeze, and if a cough came on he never got rid of it; all which he submitted to with the resignation of a martyr.

At first we were both silent, and I observed that he frequently looked behind him as if he feared being followed, till we had got quite beyond his own precincts, into a little glen, which seemed retired enough for any confidence. Here he began by frankly asking what I thought of his journal.

“That it is honesty and candour itself,” said I.

“That is not what I mean, I want your advice, perhaps your assistance, in a matter which, if you have perused the journal with attention, may have struck you. Indeed, it was for this end, I own, that I commended it to your notice; for, without a word in my own extenuation, you will have perceived that I am in a wearisome thralldom of the worst kind—thralldom to my own servants.”

“To one in particular,” observed I, watching his countenance. He looked down, but without dissent.

“It is a thralldom,” continued I, “which your position ought to be above; and, as you ask my opinion, you ought instantly, as you may easily, deliver yourself from it.”

“Easily!” said he, and shook his head.

“Yes; what is to prevent you, even on your return home, to give both Mr. John and Mrs. Mary their dismissal?”

“What, without a cause? The thing is impossible. You surely would not be so unjust. Besides, John is more necessary to me than you people of energy are able to understand; and Mary——”

Here he hesitated.

“Come,” said I, “let us be frank to one another, and allow me an important question; are the bonds you are under to this seemingly more than housekeeper——”

“Bonds!” cried he, colouring as red as scarlet, “the journal, surely, cannot have said any thing about the bonds?”

Here he again faltered.

“It has made me suppose that you have not told me the whole of your case in regard to this woman, or lady, as I presume I must call her——”

“Lady!” interrupted he; “Ah! if she were!”

“What then?”

I.

“ We should all be very different.”

“ My dear Sir Simeon,” said I, solemnly, “ I think I see the truth, though you have either been unwilling, or not had the courage, to tell it me. Your housekeeper is more to you than she seems, and you cannot get rid of her if you would. Is it not so?”

“ Perhaps you are right,” returned he, with emotion, for he trembled. “ The bonds, which how you discovered, I cannot guess, are to an immense amount, and are of consequence even to my fortune.”

“ Bonds !” cried I in my turn, and asked his meaning.

“ Why you just now alluded to them, and they are for full five thousand pounds.”

“ I was both amazed and alarmed at the *equivoque* thus discovered, which confirmed my suspicions, though to what extent was as yet not quite clear. I therefore entreated him, by our old friendship, to conceal nothing, but reveal his whole case, whatever it was, in order not to deceive ourselves as to the remedy.

“ I believe you to be a true friend,” said he in return, “ and I shall, perhaps, be relieved of a burthen by confiding every thing to you. I am then——”

“ Married !” exclaimed I ; “ married to your housekeeper ?”

“ No ; thank heaven !” replied he ; “ not yet.”

“ Something worse then.”

“ No ! nor that—not yet.”

I then gathered from him that his shyness, combined with his too great love of ease, having driven him out of all society with his equals, yet not liking to be perpetually alone, he had admitted his housekeeper to a more familiar companionship than her situation as a menial warranted ;—that she had first made his tea ; then carved for him at dinner, and for that purpose sat down at table, when it would have been cruel not to have allowed her to eat a bit with him : then, as he was often ill with colds, she generally warmed his bed, tucked him up in it, aired his nightcap, and gave him his whey ;—“ all which,” said he, “ she did at first in a manner so motherly, or rather so sisterly—for, indeed, she is only a year or two, or perhaps three, older than myself——”

Here he paused.

“ Why not,” observed I, “ say at once, so conjugally ; for that is what I perceive is coming ?”

“ Well, whatever it was,” continued he, “ the having her so constantly with me, as I may say, at bed and board, and no one to divert my thoughts from her, I began to conceive a great regard for her.”

“ Out of gratitude, I suppose ?”

“ Why, no doubt at first. And then she was so extremely gentle and respectful (very different, I own, from what she is now), that

I began to think how comfortable a still closer intimacy would be ; so after a few months going on in this way, I offered her——”

“Not marriage, you say?”

“Not positively, according to our forms, but what in Germany, you know, is called a left-handed one, and this I thought she might accept.”

“And did, no doubt,” said I.

“Why, no. She indeed appeared greatly shocked at first ; nay, absolutely indignant ; and vowed she would leave me, whatever it cost her : that she did not think I would have taken such advantage of her attachment to me ; and she shed so many tears, and was in such grief, for many days preparing to leave me, that I was at my wit’s end how to keep her. In short, she was so determined on quitting me, and I felt what a loss she would be to me so severely, that though my pride would not allow me, and I would not bind myself to marry her according to law, and she was positive against any other arrangement, it ended in my giving her a bond never to marry any one else as long as she remained in my service.”

I was astounded and grieved at such an instance of folly, such want of energy, in my poor friend, but could not help asking, as Mrs. Mary was so immaculate, what was the consideration given for so improvident a bond?

“None,” said he, “but that she should continue to reside with me in quality of housekeeper, and not marry herself. Half also of the penalty was to be forfeited, if I should dismiss her my service, even though I did not marry.”

Gracious heaven! thought I, to what may not sloth and cowardice conduct us! But as I really wished to know how an evidently artful, but uninstructed menial could have so entangled a man of understanding, whose only weakness was in his nerves, I asked if all this arrangement proceeded from Mrs. Mary alone, assisted as it might be by his own weakness ; in short, whether she had not had some coadjutor in weaving this net for him?

“Why certainly,” replied he, “she had, and a powerful one too, in her brother, one Quick, a lawyer at Ryegate, whom she consulted several times on my proposal of a left-handed marriage, about which he was very loud and angry, and threatened to expose me, of which I had a horror. Had it not been for him, I perhaps should have succeeded, and at any rate have escaped this bond.”

“And what may be the bent (I will not say the determination) of your mind, upon this lamentable crisis, which you have well denominated a thralldom?”

“Certainly not to marry her,” returned he ; “for you have no notion, Sir, how different she is from what she was at first. She was then all calmness and submission, quite a lamb. She is now a tiger cat.”

“Why not dismiss her?” said I. “Put a bold face upon it; you are rich enough, and the worst it can come to is to pay the half penalty.”

“It will never do,” said he.

“Why?”

“Because the thought of it will break her heart, which, for all her fits of passion, is I am sure attached to me. She will cry by the hour, and I own I cannot withstand her tears.”

“Pardon me,” said I, affected, but indignant at this weakness of a good nature, “if I say that there is no hope for you, and you must be abandoned to your fate.”

“That is hard,” said he with a sigh, “but it cannot be helped.”

We then began to move homewards, but were soon met by the gardener’s boy, whom Mrs. Mary had sent to find his master; for it was far too late for him to remain out, she said, and that if it had not been for the strange gentleman, she would have come herself.

“You see,” said Sir Simeon, not displeased, “how really she loves me.”

“Or her own empire over you,” observed I.

“Hush, for God’s sake,” replied he, as we entered the house.

At the tea-table, where Mrs. Mary now presided without scruple, unopposed by Sir Simeon, she took upon herself to give me a lecture for keeping him out so late, though it was August, and only eight o’clock. People, she said, who did not know other people’s constitutions, ought not to treat them as if they were the same as themselves. “I have no doubt,” added she, “that Sir Simeon will have his lumbago again by sauntering in that damp glen, and then who is to blame for it?”

In this talk *at* a person, I found Mrs. Mary quite an adept; for, during the evening, and all the rest of the time that I staid with my friend, she never addressed herself directly, either to him or me. It was always “some folks do this,” and “some folks ought to know that;” with many other innuendoes, in which she shewed considerable ingenuity.

It however, to me, became at least a serious annoyance; for, whether she feared a rival influence with Sir Simeon, who, in proportion to his deference to me, which increased daily, lost some of what he had for her, or whether she began to suspect, what was true, that I was endeavouring to rescue him from the tyranny of her dominion, she became markedly averse to me as a guest, and in no very measured terms sometimes let fall, how odious it was for people, who had no home of their own, to run about the country to other people’s houses, meddling with what did not belong to them. “For my part,” said she, “I can’t abide it, for I always hated a spy worse than a thief, and that, whatever the colour of his coat.”

I found from this, that I had lost the little place, if ever I had

one, which I thought I had possessed in the good lady's good graces. In fact, having more than once found her close at the door of the study, when I had been using all my powers with her master to assert himself, I began to suspect that she was a listener, which, indeed, most housekeepers are, even when they are not so interested as this country Roxalana was

“To bear no brother near the throne.”

I was not deterred by this from doing what I thought my duty to my friend, but took every occasion that offered to set before him, how easy it would be, with the commonest manliness, to assert his freedom, by getting rid of this artful hussy—for artful he himself began to allow that she was; and I thought I should have succeeded, when he told me he was quite prepared to pay the penalty of his bond in dismissing her.

“It would, indeed, be a relief to me,” said he, “as I can afford it, not to let a poor creature so attached to me, with all her faults, be cast helpless on the world, which she is ready to abandon for my sake. For, whatever her temper, I am sure of her there.”

I ventured to doubt even this, and though I saw it was unpalatable, set before him such causes of suspicion of a base conspiracy between her and her brother, to obtain from him the unlucky bond, and brought even her virtuous indignation (heaven forgive me if I was wrong) so much into doubt, that he actually worked himself up into a resolution to communicate his determination to her that instant. He even rang the bell for her with tolerable vigour, determined, he said, to carry his purpose into effect immediately. He would not, however, accept my offer to stay by him as his ally in case of need, during so critical a moment, of which I shall be glad if he has not since repented.

“You shall see,” said he, “I have resolution enough, when put to it. I will manage it all myself.”

Delighted with a courage so unlooked for, I retired, and abided the event with not a little interest, for I was heartily desirous of success in a measure I looked upon as one of life and death to my friend.

The reader will be astonished at the result; indeed I was astonished myself; but such is poor human nature.

After the parties had been closeted full an hour, during which I walked the garden with some impatience, for I did not like so long an interview, in returning to the house I met the lady herself, fiery red with agitation, and eyes that had evidently been deluged with tears. But on seeing me she assumed a quietness of demeanour, and, with a sort of sardonic smile, dropped me a low courtesy; then, finding her tongue, said with emphasis,

“Some folks will perhaps be disappointed after all, and had

better have staid at home, if they had one, than seek to break the peace of honest families, to serve their own ends."

With this she flounced out of the hall, leaving me in wonder, and I own, not a little uneasy both for my friend and myself. His door now creaking upon its hinges, half-opened to let his head out, for his body seemed afraid to follow it, and looking anxiously round the hall, as if to ascertain that nobody was there, he beckoned me in ; and if I foreboded little good from his looks, I certainly gathered none from his account of the interview.

"O! my friend," said he, "let no one—at least, no one of my temper—boast of resolution till he is tried. I am a coward ; I know it, I own it, I lament it, but I cannot cure it. Yet, poor thing! how could I help being softened by such gentleness! such attachment! I opened like a man; but when, instead of encountering a vixen, as I expected, I found a humble, heart-broken creature, in misery to leave me; when I beheld her tears, and heard her sobs; when I saw her bosom heaving with distress, and she even fell on her knees at my feet——"

"The devil," said I; "go no farther; flesh and blood, as you were going to say, could not resist it. Your bond, I see, is safe, and Mrs. Mary, like all other governors and governesses who have triumphed over mutinous subjects, will be more confirmed in her power than ever. Adieu then, my dear Sir Simeon, I perceive this is now no place for me, and I will release you both from the pain of getting rid of me. The woman is shrewd enough to see who is her enemy, and what he thinks of her. Her agony, I apprehend, did not prevent the mention of my name."

"Yes; she mentioned it," said Sir Simeon, with some agitation.

"And with not many honourable additions, no doubt."

"She certainly attributed my projected change to you, but I satisfied her that the resolution was all my own."

"And you have given it up?"

"Why not exactly; but she is to stay a little while longer on trial."

"I should have thought the fruits of the bond would have made her eager to go."

"O! you don't know her; she said if she had the vile parchment here, she would put it in the fire; but it was in her brother's keeping, and he would never part with it."

"Or else she would undoubtedly do what she said?"

"I believe so."

Here our conversation ended, except that my poor friend entreated and implored that I would not think of leaving him; that I was his best and only support against himself; his counsellor, his consoler, his right hand.

In short, though I felt all the annoyance of living in a hurricane, which I was sure to do with Mrs. Mary, after what had passed, yet

he was so earnest and warm, and plainly so sincere in his entreaties, that he got the better of my prudence, and, to serve him—for he had many good qualities—I consented to encounter the most dangerous thing in nature, an enraged and revengeful woman. !

I, however, never saw her afterwards; for the very next day Sir Simeon, after a great deal of embarrassment of manner, many hums and clearances of his throat, and colouring all over with a shame he could not conceal, took me aside, and told me, if he was not assured of the sincerity of my friendship, as well as what he was pleased to call the generosity of my nature, he would not dare confess what he was about to do; but he owned that, upon reflection, he found I was right, “as you always are,” said he, “and though I cannot sufficiently apologize for asking it, I think it best you should withdraw, at least, for a time. From a conference I have had with poor Mary,” added he, “I see she will never be happy while you are in the house; yet she offered to leave me herself rather than I should lose you, who, she said, did me so much good. This I refused; but was it not kind of the good creature? You see you have been mistaken in attributing so much art to her character.”

I bowed to this proof of profound penetration in my friend, and prepared immediately for my return to London.

Three weeks afterwards, the papers informed me that Sir Simeon Saunter was married to Miss Mary Quickly, sister of Mounteney Quickly, Esq., the eminent solicitor of Ryegate.

Poor fellow! His happiness, if he had any with her, did not last, for a twelvemonth afterwards he was carried off by a brain fever, bequeathing, by a will made by the eminent solicitor, his brother-in-law, his fortune to his widow, to the exclusion of his heir-at-law, and his library to me; the latter, I believe, not without considerable opposition on the part of both the widow and her brother.

The foregoing sketch, drawn from the life, went far, as I have said, to recover me from the sort of trance of indolence into which I had fallen, and which, had it continued, would, as Fothergill prognosticated, have proved my ruin.

At this epoch, therefore, I was more obliged to my kind adviser than ever, for it was his leniency and skill combined that alone restored me to the possession of myself. At first I was only amused by the memoirs of Sir Simeon. I laughed and passed on. But by degrees I meditated; and found that, by prompting reflection, memoirs may be made far different from a mere chronicle of facts. Sir Simeon, indeed, from Fothergill's account of him (though offered to me as a mere narrative), became a beacon, a lesson, a hand-writing on the wall; in fact, a scarecrow; and whenever I found indolence or indifference undermining resolution, he glared upon me, and I returned to study.

Much, however, was also owing to recovered health and spirits, and I in secret boasted to myself that the infliction I had suffered was the *last* tribute I should pay to the influence of Bertha.

The romance of the "Lover's Hope" fell, as it deserved, into oblivion, and perhaps no small help to me in the affair arose from the total absence of Granville. That feeder of flame, even when most intent on extinguishing it, returned not to Oxford for many months, and in the interval never wrote to me.

He had joined a gay party at Paris, of which the centre, ornament, and illustration, as he afterwards told me, was that Lady Hungerford whose bust I had observed in Bertha's garden-room. Here he passed the whole winter.

If Bertha had forgotten me, she at least had no opportunity of discovering that she herself was remembered. It is true, little remembrances of her kindness would too often flit across, so as almost to unman me; but the remembrance, also, that this kindness was nothing more than good-will, went far to arm me against her; and when I repeated, as I did, at least once a day, the emphatic words, "Mr. De Clifford, why is this? You must not breathe a syllable in this style; surely I have given you no reason to think I expect it"—all this operated upon me like a goading stimulant, whenever I felt my courage beginning to droop.

Meantime, I was not ill pleased to think, from Granville's absence, that the family at the Park had not the means of knowing the influence they had so long retained over me. How far I may have indulged myself sometimes in thinking that they might wish this were otherwise, and desire to know at least what was become of me, I will not inquire.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF THE FRESH AND GREATER OBJECTS WHICH MY TUTOR SET BEFORE ME, AND MY EAGERNESS TO PURSUE THEM.

As the world were now but to begin.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

THUS, in fact, passed a very long period of my early academical life, varied with little scenes, which have become favourites in my recollections. My progress to recovery was not only owing to my dedication of myself to letters, but the recovery advancing made my progress in letters still greater. In this, Fothergill never failed me, and opened, as I grew ripe for it, much wider sources of information than was confined to what is called learning. For a man who was to live in the world, which he always bade me recollect I

was to do, there were two sciences, he said, worth all the rest—Modern History and Modern Manners—by which last he meant the morals of men.

It was surprising how much a mere Cumberland boor (as he with some affectation called himself) knew of the first of these. Of the last, I have given many specimens. In the first, however, he had profited by his intimacy with Lord Castleton, who, highly gifted, and living himself on a sea of politics, was necessarily devoted to, and well understood, those subjects; and what he knew he had not failed to communicate to Fothergill, and Fothergill to me.

“Who knows,” said my tutor, “but if you accomplish yourself in this interesting knowledge, you may one day be acquainted with this excellent and able nobleman, and bring it more to profit in the world than I did.”

The thought struck instantaneously and deeply into my mind, and, without having any definite ideas upon it, it sharpened my industry, so that I acquired a very decent modicum of modern memoirs, politics, and diplomacy.

But even superior to this, in Fothergill’s mind, was the inexhaustible, the never-ending, still beginning subject of human nature. “This, however,” he said, “you can never acquire with closed doors.”

He was here indeed, or would have been, a favourite disciple of Johnson, and would have walked Fleet-street and the Strand with as much success as the sage. In pursuance of this, he laid before me a plan for the long vacations (especially as my cure of Bertha advanced) which was charming to my fancy.

“Go,” said he, “pay your duty to your father and mother; shew and gladden them with your improvements; but do not stay too long. ‘Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits.’ See the world in all the shapes of it you can master. You cannot do it *en grand seigneur*; you cannot afford a post-chaise; and if you could, it would be the readiest way to defeat your object. Perhaps even a horse might be objectionable. A philosopher on foot (or we will ennoble him with the name of a peripatetic) finds out most of life. For this purpose, indeed, a stage-coach is not despicable, but a private carriage will tell you nothing. A pedestrian expedition, however, is *the* thing. This I should have found out of myself (for I have often practised it) even without the glowing panegyric upon it by Rousseau, which, with a view to my proposal, I have looked out for you.”

So saying, he put the volume into my hands, and I read, with much interest, the following passages:—

“Jamais je n’ai tant pensé, tant existé, tant vécu, tant été moi, si j’ose ainsi dire, que dans ces voyages que j’ai faits seul et à pied. La marche a quelque chose qui anime mes idées; je ne puis presque

penser quand je reste en place ; il faut que mon corps soit en branle pour y mettre mon esprit. La vue de la campagne, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, le grand appétit, la bonne santé que je gagne en marchant ; *la liberté du cabaret, l'éloignement de tout ce qui me fait sentir ma dépendance, de tout ce qui me rappelle à ma situation*, tout cela dégage mon âme, me donne une plus grande audace de penser, me jette en quelque sorte dans l'immensité des êtres, pour les combiner, les choisir, me les approprier sans gêne et sans crainte ; *je dispose en maître de la nature entière* ; mon cœur errant d'objet en objet, s'unit, s'identifie à ceux qui le flattent, s'entoure d'images charmantes, s'enivre de sentiments délicieux. Si pour les fixer je m'amuse à les décrire en moi-même, quelle vigueur de pinceau, quelle fraîcheur de coloris, quelle énergie d'expression je leur donne ! ”

I was so warmed with this description, that it was like a match to a train, and I was impatient to begin the tour.

“ I thought it would excite you, as it did me at your age,” said Fothergill. “ But recollect all you have to expect and encounter. At the same time ; though there may be apparent difficulties (chiefly from false pride), common sense, and that spice of romance which you have in your composition, will bring you through.”

CHAPTER XL.

I LEARN HOW TO TAKE A WALK.—PICTURE OF A CONTEMPLATIVE MAN
AND PRACTICAL OBSERVER.

But what said Jaques ?

Did he not moralize this spectacle ?

Oh ! yes ; into a thousand similes.

SHAKSPEARE.—*As You Like It.*

UNDER such a master, no wonder if my own similar disposition to observe, and to reason upon what he called the moral phenomena of our species, as well as upon things of a higher character, was cultivated and improved. In fact, I never knew a man so formed to conduct a youthful mind in all that was most precious to its welfare, whether worldly or religious. He drew lessons from every thing he saw or heard, of the most common, as well as of the rarest occurrence. In short, the world was his study, and all things that filled it, whether animate or inanimate, material or spiritual, were made subservient to this great end ; and this disposition he did his utmost to encourage and cherish in me.

Such a preceptor was of inestimable value to me, and his mode of conveying instruction by familiar colloquy was more lastingly

impressive, as well as more pleasant, from its very familiarity, than a formal lecture *ex cathedra*. The lecture might be forgotten; the friendly conversation never.

Upon this principle, and inculcating a habit of keen observation as the best road to knowledge, he would ask frequently, at the close of the day, what I had been doing? what I had seen, and what remarked, particularly as to men's motives of action—whether by examining my own, or those of others?

When I have been surprised at this, and at being told I could know other men's motives by my own, he has cut me short by asking if I had never heard the searching phrase, “You judge of others by yourself.” For he held, that a man *well* acquainted with his own heart might, from its workings alone (nay, its very weaknesses), get a fair acquaintance with that of another.

“Your own heart,” he would say, “is so far like that of others, as to have passions and springs common to the rest of your kind. Whatever, therefore, is found there, may be found elsewhere; and though others may have what you have not, yet at least what you have must belong to human nature at large, though perhaps not to every individual who composes it.”

Observing that I had grown more and more fond of walking without companions, except my own thoughts, he said, “If this proceed from your still cherishing what you ought to drive from your memory, you are perverse as well as imprudent.”

When I assured him it arose chiefly from my fondness for walking unrestrained by company, he once asked me, “And do you know how to take a walk?”

I thought this an odd question, and told him so; when he replied, that he agreed with a foreign philosophical writer, who said, few men knew how to do this. To prove it, he asked me what I examined in my walks?

“Do you inspect men and things?” asked he; “animate and inanimate? And does the inspection lead you to principles? to causes and effects? and, above all, to trace them to the great First Cause of all? In short, does the earth take you to heaven? Without this, you do not know how to take a walk.”

Seeing me rather ponder upon this, and expressing still more wonder, he one day said—“If you do not know how to gather knowledge from the smallest object or occurrence in the ever varying scene that opens upon you when abroad, you might as well never stir from home, particularly if you have company, who may instruct if they do not amuse you. But a contemplative man will gather instruction and pleasure (the pleasure of adding to his stores) from every thing he sees or hears. If his walk be in the country, not a tree, or leaf, or tuft of grass (coursed by the fairies), not a sound of a bird—particularly of the stock-dove, or thrush, most of

all, of the nightingale—but whispers pleasure to his heart. The bleat of the lamb ; the lowing of herds ; the murmurs of waterfalls ; the rising or setting sun ; the soft and soothing twilight ;—all these enter his soul, fill him with rapture almost unaccountable to himself, till he raises his thoughts to Him who created all—diffuses all—and gives us power to value all, as a far more real source of happiness than what the children of the world toil after in vain. For is it not in vain, when, even if obtained, the things sought are, in many instances, nothing but gewgaws, often deemed worthless by those who have pursued them, and thrown away, as gewgaws of spoilt children generally are? Depend upon it, whatever the pursuit or occupation, however gorgeous the object, or flattering the ambition, nothing is really valuable where the mind enters not.”

“ But if I merely walk the streets ? ” said I.

“ There is more mind there,” answered he, “ than anywhere else. They are full of intellectual food. You see there all the varieties of life, in all their characters, their good or bad fortune—business, amusements, actions ; the noble, the generous, the selfish, the trifling, the vicious—all are here depicted, in interesting and sparkling colours, in the countenance, gait, and movement of every man you meet. The ardour of ambition about to be crowned ; the gloom and mortification of ambition disappointed ; the speculations of avarice ; the torture of suspicion ; the stratagems of hypocrisy ; the excitement of hope ; the uncertainties, the pleasures, the miseries of love ! These, and all the other ten thousand diversities of our wayward nature, are presented, as in a glass, to him who knows how to take a walk. Was not my author right, then, in saying that few had that knowledge ? ”

I willingly deferred to all this, which only excited me more and more to put in execution the plan for the pedestrian expedition he had proposed, on which I was now impatient to set out, and named the day when I would first go home to communicate with my family.

“ A parting observation,” said he, “ before you go. Recollect you will, according to this scheme, have little to do with the upper ranks ; and in what you may call this abasement, you must count upon some mortifications. These you must laugh at, or give up the undertaking. At any rate, you have only to imagine yourself (indeed it will be only true, and a great deal more romantic, and therefore more to your taste) a gentleman in disguise. Only recollect that, however you travel, every little incident that occurs may, with proper powers of mind, be turned to account.”

I quite fell in with these suggestions, and was almost as eager for my first sally as Don Quixote.

I went home to Bardolfe to announce my intention, and my father did not oppose it, especially when he heard it was by Fothergill's recommendation. My brothers, indeed, thought it a *queer* thing

for “t’ young doctor to set off after a Willy-with-a-wisp,” as they called it, with no object of business, and nothing to see but the same creatures as our own market town supplied nearer home. But as I could afford to pay my way, they agreed I had a right to please myself.

So, after a few days’ visit to my family at the commencement of the long vacation, I returned to Oxford to equip myself for my expedition, which I meant to direct southward through the neighbouring counties. Here my adventures furnish very different scenes from those I have reported, and some of them, as will be seen, led to most important changes in my prospects, as well as my ultimate fate.

CHAPTER XLI.

I START ON A TOUR OF OBSERVATION.—THE FEELINGS OF A YOUTH ABOUT TO VIEW THE WORLD.

This morning, like the spirit of a youth
That means to be of note, begins by times.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Antony and Cleopatra*.

IT was not five o’clock in the morning, in the first week in August, when I started from my cell in the old quadrangle of the venerable Maudlin, to commence my novel excursion. In my way, passing Queen’s, I beheld my old friend the porter already opening his gates, and preparing to wash them, for he was proud of, and loved them seemingly with a lover’s fondness. Hence let none of us suppose that there are no interests (and exciting ones too) except among great ones. The porter of Queen’s was as eagerly occupied in furbishing up his gates, as the duchess of Q. in cleaning her diamonds. Perhaps his pride in them was the least selfish, and therefore the more respectable of the two.

This earliest of my academical friends had always treated me with great respect, which was not a little increased by my election to Maudlin, a demy of which he considered as the high road to a fellowship, the acme, in his eyes (with the sole exception of the head of a house), of all earthly dignity.

What was my old friend’s wonder, when he saw the equipments of my pedestrian journey—a small knapsack strapt to my shoulders, a short coat with many pockets, and, for convenience in walking, denuded of skirts. Trowsers, half-gaiters, and thick shoes (which, in those days of buckskin breeches, cordovan boots and pumps, were by no means condescended to by the Oxford dandies, among whom, by the porter at least, I had been reckoned), completed my appearance. Thus equipped, with about thirty guineas in my

pocket, and staff in hand, like an old patriarch (I mean in regard to the staff, not the guineas), I was proceeding on my way.

The janitor, who knew nothing of romance, or that I was so well furnished, beheld me with consternation; and when he learned that I was quitting Oxford for the vacation, I saw he suspected me of poverty, nor could my assurances that I walked for pleasure undeceive him. I am afraid, notwithstanding my own romance, I was fool enough to be annoyed at this, and glad not only that the various colleges had been emptied of their inhabitants by the vacation, but that the few who remained were wrapt in sleep. I had, in fact, at first thought of going in a gig, in order not to disparage the demy of Maudlin by the appearance of a tramper. But I grew ashamed of the feeling, and rallied like a brave fellow, resolved to defy prejudice; though even the honest porter, I thought, touched his hat less reverently than usual; but such is the world!

Be that as it will, I never felt in better spirits than when I set out. The prospect before me was one of hope, of adventure; and hope, as Lord Bacon says, is a good breakfast though a bad supper; but be it noted, I was then twenty years old, and thought only of breakfast. Fothergill's prognostics, too, in regard to Lord Castleton, still tingled in my ears; and meanwhile; to use his words, it was holiday time, and I was to see a little of the world with my own eyes, instead of those of the book-men. What could be more taking to a sanguine youth, who thought that world all his own?

The weather, too (no small ingredient in a scheme of happiness), was opportunely propitious; nay, it seemed bespoke. It had rained in the night, not in torrents, that sweep and lash the plains, but in mild and gentle showers, just sufficient to cool the earth, and by their genial moisture to wake every thing into freshness. Sweet indeed was this breath of morn; for the meadows were full of butter-cups, the grass emitted perfume, the hedges and their wild-flowers breathed fragrance, and the birds sang pæans. Could a young collegian fail to think of his Virgil?

“*Lucifero primo cum sidere frigida rura
Carpamus, dum mane novum, dum gramina canent,
Et ros in tenerâ pecori gratissimus herbâ est*’.”

I thought, too, of something almost still more beautiful, from its simplicity :

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages; let us go up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth’.”

’ Before the sun when Hesperus appears,
First let them sip from herbs the pearly tears
Of morning dews, then let them break their fast,
On greensward ground, a cool and grateful taste.

DRYDEN.

² Canticle 7, 12.

I doubt if the fine people of the world, who live upon excitement, and sicken at the very name of quiet, will agree with me ; but setting its concomitant sentiment aside, I know not a sensual pleasure equal to the vivifying return of life to fields and gardens after showers. Every plant seems restored, every tree looks grateful, as if it had a soul, and thought, and felt, and thanked the giver.

Could the real soul of man not respond to this, or not confess the benign influence of that Deity who is present, as it were, within him, on contemplating such a scene?

With this feeling, bursting into soliloquy, I exclaimed,

“The morning breathes, and cometh on with new gladness. Arise, fair morning, and bring on the day, that every living thing may wake and praise the Lord.”

The sentiment recalled a similar one, only dressed in more poetry, which those who will not laugh at the above apostrophe may perhaps forgive me if I transcribe.

“Only the wakeful lark^{*} had left her nest ; and was mounted on high to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the husbandman to his toil, and all her fellow-songsters to their notes. ‘Earliest of birds,’ said I, ‘companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice ! Rise to offer the matin song, and adore that Being who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise him.’ How charming to rove abroad at this sweet hour of prime ! To enjoy the calm of nature ; to tread the dewy lawns, and taste the *unruffled* freshness of the air !”

Many perhaps will think this an ebullition of Rousseau. It is at least very like him. Let them not laugh when I tell them it belongs to a country parson, as opposed to Rousseau as light to darkness ; save that both were men of genius, and Hervey as great an admirer of nature, with a hundred times his virtue, as Rousseau himself.

Well, my tour was commenced, and I may say, perhaps without self-flattery, that I was not the last man in the world to be sent upon such an expedition. My health was restored, and I felt stronger than I had been in earlier parts of my life. My heart, too, though I had not drunk too copiously of Lethe, was tolerably at rest. Without at all extinguishing that romance, without which no pleasure of the imagination (which a tour always is) can hold for a day, I really longed to behold more of the moral as well as natural world. Perhaps I hoped in time to imitate Fothergill in this. I certainly was not ashamed of the hope.

But, exclusive of this, I had notions of mental pleasure to be drawn from a tour, or journey, which, if not peculiar to myself, were certainly not belonging to every traveller. I was not like a certain great earl, notorious for his causticity, who made the tour

^{*} The light-enamoured bird.

of Europe in his carriage without once allowing its back to be touched by his ¹.

My brothers' notion of my hunting a Willy-with-a-wisp was not absolutely incorrect; for, with liberty thus all before me, I felt any thing but disposed to confine myself to the beaten track. Once the silly shame of my knapsack conquered, independence seemed inclosed in it with my shirts and stockings, for I had not any thing else, not even the black silk breeches of Sterne, which stood him in such stead with the Piedmontese lady, in his journey over Mount Taurira ².

Accordingly, I resolved that no consideration, either of time or place, should prevent the indulgence of any object, or even any whim I might propose to myself, and that I would follow my fancy wherever it led me. One pleasure indeed of a journey (I should say its greatest) is, to give the fullest play to the imagination. For with that, every fine prospect—every gentleman's seat, with its avenue or park—and, in the same manner, every snug box, farm, or hermitage, becomes our own. A garden of flowers, or bees, brings Virgil before us; a flock of goats among rocks, Horace.

But if a castle appear in the distance, with its donjon keep, its towers, and labelled windows; its mullions and corbels; Kenilworth or Ashby, Plessis les Tours or Inverary, rise to one's view: what chivalry, what passages of arms does not that draw forth! At the same time, what oubliettes and legends of bygone tyrannies are not conjured up, making us hug ourselves that these last exist now only in story, and that a peaceable, way-faring pilgrim, like myself, may walk by, without danger of being run up in a noose, for not doing as Macallum More bids us.

On these occasions, the eye is not the only faculty set to work in the sentimental traveller. In passing a dwelling, whether a mansion or farm, or rustic vicarage, we plan the lives and occupations of all their inhabitants, or our own, should we ever come to possess such spots.

No end to *châteaux en Espagne*, and the more the sun shines, the more does our fancy. If we roam through a wood, be sure 'tis the forest of Ardennes; and Orlando and Rosalind flit before our eyes.

A circle on the greensward is straightway thronged with fairies: and a glade of soft turf, skreened with trees, is peopled by the figures of Watteaux. We see his groupes of court ladies, with their well-dressed partners, and flutes and guitars. We then moralize upon elegant pleasures, and think the business of the world (we are indeed flying from it) nothing but useless care.

This, with health, and hope, and money (ever so little, if it pay

¹ James, sixth Earl of Abercorn.

² See the last and most amusing chapter of the "Sentimental Journey."

our way), produce the highest good-humour—itself the highest happiness.

All this is indeed illusion. Yet if we really tread on classic ground (as I did in a very few days after my starting), at Binfield¹, Cooper's Hill², and Chertsey³, and above all, when, some time afterwards, I visited Stratford-upon-Avon, what a tumult of interest presses upon the brain!

“ We seem through consecrated walks to rove ;
We hear soft music die along the grove ;
Led by the sound, we roam from shade to shade,
By godlike poets venerable made.”

“ Here, his first lays majestic Denham sung ;
There, the last numbers flow'd from Cowley's tongue.”

Have I said enough to recommend my tour?

CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE STRANGE PERSONAGE I MET ON MY TRAVELS.—THE STRANGE OPINIONS HELD BY HIM ON THE MISCHIEFS BELONGING TO SOCIETY, AND HIS STRANGE PLAN FOR REMEDYING THEM.

I pry'thee, sweet wag, shall there be a gallows standing in England
when thou art king?—SHAKSPEARE.—1 *Henry IV.*

THE observation of Fothergill when he proposed this pleasant undertaking to me, that “ every little incident that occurred might, if I pleased, be turned to account,” was by no means forgotten from the moment I left Oxford. To be sure, beyond what I might have described, there was little of note the first two days, except, that I never so fully felt the truth of the picture, that the man who engages in this sort of excursion, if of a certain cast of mind, bordering on the sentimental, and cheerful withal,

“ From each thing met conceives delight.”

The villages and farms of England are, indeed, proverbial for the comfort they exhibit, and therefore, for the pleasure they communicate to any traveller who has a spark of benevolence in him, —without which he had better not travel at all. Thus, wherever I advanced I felt at home, but particularly when I had penetrated into the rich, rural, and well-cultivated county of Berks.

I did this at last, after loitering pleasingly (so that I was loth to quit them) along the sides of the lovely Thames, flowing through

¹ Where Pope sang his earliest lays.

² Denham's favourite haunt.

³ Cowley's last retreat.

meadows illumined by the sun, which turned every thing into green and gold.

I met, of course, a variety of travellers of various degrees, who shewed me different marks of respect, according to their different notions of themselves and of me. All of them seemed to cast an eye of criticism on my knapsack. Those in carriages, or horsemen of an upper rank, were not uncivil, but never looked twice. While the bags-men, or gentlemen travellers, as they are called, seemed horrified to look once. For as soon as they perceived my knapsack, like the Levite, after looking, they passed on the other side. It was only pedestrians like myself who seemed sometimes, though not always, glad to join company, on terms of equality; a liberty which, being one of themselves, I could not reasonably refuse.

What at first appeared remarkable was, that from my knapsack, black neckcloth, and light trowsers (black neckcloths not being worn then by the many), I was generally taken for a soldier. Some thought I was passing home on furlough, some that I was a deserter.

This last idea was entertained by a fellow-traveller who joined me on the third day, on the road between Wallingford and Reading. He was a hale, dark, loud man, strong built, and well fed and clothed, with shaggy black brows, almost closing up eyes which, when seen, had a most sinister expression. In short, like Smollett's Cadwallader, "He squinted with a most horrid obliquity of vision."

This personage joined me just as I was in the happy mood occasioned by passing through a succession of well-cultivated fields, and clean cottages, all amidst small but well-kept plots of garden ground, prolific in culinary herbs and flowers, exhibiting the promise of future plenty and innocent amusement. I was, therefore, little prepared for the rencontre that took place. After the usual salutations, and he had surveyed me very critically with a good deal of suspicion,

"A gentleman soldier, I suppose," said he, inquiringly. "Pray, what regiment?"

"You are wrong," replied I, shortly, for I did not like his ill-omened countenance, and walked quickly on.

"You need not be afraid of me," continued he. "I am no kidnapper, and would rather help an honest deserter to flee from slavery, than peach him, though to get the reward."

"You are wrong again," said I. "I have told you I am not a soldier; and if I were, I would not be a deserter."

"More fool you," he answered, "if in your power to escape from those rascally tyrants whom we pay only for keeping honest men from their own."

I liked my sententious companion so little, that at first I wished to shake him off, and walked quick or slow, as I thought would best serve that purpose; but he foiled me by always altering his

own pace accordingly, and at length observed with some roughness,

“You seem a dry one, young fellow, though I have told you, you need not be afraid of me; for I would not, I tell you, peach, even if you had robbed your master, or were running away from your own father. Masters and fathers are but rum commodities, and will never allow the world to be free.”

“I don’t agree with you,” replied I; but struck somehow with what seemed so unusual in the man’s ideas, I renounced my wish to get rid of him, and encouraged him to develop himself still more, by entering into conversation with him. When, continuing his notion of my military capacity, he asked if I had come from Windsor barracks, I said, no, from Oxford. “But pray,” continued I, “as you have expressed some curiosity about me, may I ask who you are yourself?”

“I am one of the few,” returned he, sternly, “who dare to think for themselves, hold that the world has all got wrong, and that it will never be to rights till——”

“Till what?”

“Till every thing is reversed that we see about us; till there be no kings or queens; nor even magistrates; and of course no gibbets to hang men upon merely for attempting to get their own.”

“Attempting to get their own,” cried I; “is that the way you designate robbery? for that, I suppose, is what you mean.”

“Aye! there it is,” said he. “None of you smooth-faced gentlemen, who, though forced to walk on foot while others ride in their carriages, but loady those real robbers of the poor, by calling that robbery which is only justice. If you ever heard of the laws of nature, you must know that the first of them is equality as to property, and every thing else. Nay, a community of goods was originally the law of Christianity; but soon the rascally priests abolished it; after which men grew rich by robbing others of their share. Yet if one of the robbed attempt to recover part of his property, he is himself called robber, and hanged like a dog, or shot like a carrion crow. Out upon such a world!”

He said this with such emphasis, that though I believed him mad, I thought him at least sincere. He, however, went on:—

“Of course, too, you soldiers (for I still believe you to be one) should all be put down; fathers, instead of being tyrants over their children till twenty-one, should have no authority after they are fifteen; for I would follow the laws of nature in every thing, and they shew, that boys are then marriageable, and marriage (if it be allowed at all) at least shews the time for emancipation.”

“Allowed at all!”

“Yes. For where can we find nature speak so well as in the brutes, who in most things far excel us? There is at least no wickedness among them, and there are no marriages among them; and

children, as soon as they can provide for themselves, leave their fathers and mothers, and never know them again. Is not this unanswerable?"

"I quite agree with you," said I, much amused, and wishing now to draw him out.

"I don't believe you," replied he, "for just now you would not allow that masters and fathers were rum commodities; and if it was not for your knapsack and black stock, as you say you come from Oxford, I should take you for one of those black-gowned hypocrites, who, under pretence of godliness, humbug people out of their rights. Was there ever such a barefaced pillage as tithes? Yet, forsooth, it is all for our good, to enable them to pray for and instruct us; as if we could not pray for and instruct ourselves! With my good will, Oxford and Cambridge, and all such harbours for designing priests, should be burnt down; and if the priests along with them, it would not be amiss, for they have been the cause of all the miseries of the world, from Adam. Why, the very grammar paints them to the life:—'Bos, fur, sus, atque sacerdos.'"

"I thought," said I, "that line had only been to denote the genders of the nouns mentioned, not the character of *sacerdos*."

"So those who only skim the surface think," returned he, contemptuously. "They see not that even Lily in this intended (though he veiled it, from fear of the tyrant law) to depict the clergy in their proper colours. I am, however, translating some of these rules, in a sort of verse, for the instruction of the people, and if you buy my book when it is published (it is cheap, in order to be more widely distributed), you will find the English run thus:—

' Bos—when among his neighbours' wives;
Fur—when gathering his tithes;
Sus—when he swills at parish feast;
Sacerdos—to complete the priest.'

"There can be no doubt of all this," said I, beginning, however, to wish to get rid of my new preceptor; when, looking at me with stricter scrutiny, he observed,

"If you are sincere, perhaps you will give me a proof of it when we arrive at Reading—to which I suppose you are going—by enrolling your name in a society which I have instituted there, and at which I am to lecture this evening. The disciples are already numerous; you will have to pay twenty shillings subscription to cover expenses, and what you please to me, as lecturer and instructor in the real rights of man."

"You are a public lecturer, then?"

"Yes; for I look upon myself as born to renovate society, and lighten the darkness even of Europe, but of England in particular; for, from want of mere moral courage, the wisest and best spirits in

it are content to be oppressed by fools and cowards. Such are the monopolizers of wealth and power. But I am setting up, and am daily more and more successful, a new code of laws, which will extinguish all abuses whatever, being founded on the eternal rights of nature : one of which is, to have all things in common."

"Wives and all?" asked I, affecting great simplicity.

"We have not yet got to that pass," returned he, "from the inveterate prejudices that oppose us ; but after a few more lectures I shall not despair of it. This evening, however, is set aside for another part of the subject, which will be worth hearing should you attend."

"Pray what?"

"Why, you may have heard (or, as you are not an inhabitant of Reading, perhaps you have not heard) that a poor man was shot two nights ago, in the act of what was called *breaking* into the mayor's house ; shot by the mayor himself!"

"And was he *not* breaking in?" asked I.

"Why yes ; if unbarring a window, merely to get what he had a right to, is breaking in."

"With what intent?"

"Aye ; that is the true question. The poor man was starving ; the mayor lived in abundance. The man had a right to his share of the fruits of the earth ; the mayor had too many of them. This, however, the distressed man did not well know, till he had attended my lectures, and convinced himself that he had a right to deliver himself by his own act from the injustice of the laws of property. He therefore only wished to take from the monopolist what might bring them more to the equality intended by nature. To do this, he certainly tried to get into the house in the middle of the night, and was savagely shot in the attempt. I am to lecture upon it this evening, and shall prove it a cruel and bloody murder."

"I have no doubt of it," I answered ; "but pray, in proving this from the law of nature, may you not run a little risk from the law of the land? May not this very mayor think himself libelled, to say nothing of the community?"

"The mayor ! the community !" cried he ; "what can they do? Though you come from Oxford, you seem not to know that the schoolmaster is abroad ; and the march of intellect is such, that they dare not interfere. If the mayor was to do so, he would be shot to-morrow. But I hear the Wallingford coach behind us, on which I have an outside place to Reading, having, in fact, come from Wallingford, and was only walking till it should come up. Farewell. I trust I shall see you in the evening, and that what you will hear may quicken your ideas. Ask for Dr. Firebrass's lecture-room. Anybody will shew it you."

“Dr. Firebrass ! You have then graduated at a university. May I ask if it was at Oxford?”

“God forbid !”

“Cambridge, perhaps?”

“God forbid ! But I am Dr. Firebrass, nevertheless.”

At these words the coach coming up, to my relief I own, this institutor of a new code of laws, which was to supersede all the old ones, and renovate Europe, took his leave, and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF ANOTHER STRANGER WHO JOINED ME ON HIS ROAD, VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE LAST; AND OF THE CONVERSATION WE HAD TOGETHER ON THE MISTAKES ABOUT HAPPINESS.

An I had been a man of any occupation.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Julius Cæsar*.

FOR a mile or two I could not forget my strange acquaintance, and was debating with myself whether or not I should seek him out at Reading, and hear his lecture. For I thought it would at least be amusing, if not instructive, in shewing to what extravagance a hot brain may push a wicked heart. My thoughts, however, were diverted by being overtaken by another pedestrian, whose quick step did not at all suit my lounging disposition, whether of mind or body.

But my new companion, on coming up, slackened his pace (indeed it was just at the beginning of a hill), and taking off his hat to wipe his forehead, remarked that it was fine weather for walking. I assented, but said nothing more, which did not satisfy my new friend, who did not disdain to talk to a stranger even of my doubtful appearance. This, I soon found, arose from a good-natured heartiness of disposition, with perhaps an irrepressible *cacoethes loquendi*—in plain English, a love of gossiping.

He seemed to revel in the fine weather, which he informed me was the best gift of heaven, and better than a thousand a year. To this I agreed, especially when he added, that he always got moped and blue-deviled unless he had somebody to talk to, and walked ten miles a day.

“It is just that distance,” said he, “from my house to Wallingford and back. This I perform every day when it does not rain; often when it does; and am all the better for it.”

“No doubt,” said I, looking at his rubicund complexion, and limbs active and vigorous (though his face shewed marks of age, and his head was grey); “no doubt it contributes to bodily health.”

“Aye,” returned he, “and still more to health of mind.”

The remark seemed more than common-place, and made me survey my fellow-traveller a little more particularly, and I found at least nothing repulsive in him. He might be about fifty, and had the air and look of a man comfortable within himself: an open, composed, and confiding countenance, the reverse of the cloudy Firebrass; in short, *bonhomme*, mixed with intelligence. What perhaps recommended him more, he noticed my knapsack without superciliousness. On the contrary, he observed how independent it must always make a man in his journeys; "the truest way," said he, "of enjoying liberty."

This pleased me, and I relaxed from my English sullenness, disposed to a chat which I thought might prove more agreeable, though perhaps not so striking, as the last I had had. I replied, therefore, very frankly to the hints, rather than direct questions, which he made as we wound up the hill together, proceeding in fact, from the right which all fellow-travellers on a road seem legitimately to have, to inquire into one another's professions, and the immediate objects which have brought them together. When I had, therefore, answered his question as to whence I came, and mentioned Oxford, I thought there was no harm in satisfying another, as to the college I belonged to, and also in explaining that I travelled on foot, for pleasure, in order the better to indulge my fancy as to the face of the country, or the little adventures which might arise in the course of my progress.

"Nothing more pleasant," said he; "and I should think an excellent preservative against the spleen. For while you can always recruit yourself when tired with too much walking, you are not exposed to the misfortune of being tired with too much rest."

I thought this an odd remark, and told him so.

"It may seem such," he observed, "but I assure you it is founded in experience; for hence my daily journey to Wallingford and back."

"I suppose," said I, "you may have business there?"

"Not in the least," he answered; "my business is only to read the newspapers at the Bear, and get my letters, if I have any, from the post."

I found afterwards he was a sort of moral philosopher, without knowing it; like the Ofellus of Horace, "*abnormis sapiens*," made so by a study of himself. For he gave this account of his former and present habits.

"I was bred to business," said he, "but fear I made a mistake in quitting it, which indeed I believe every man does who retires at all before he is absolutely worn out. Now, I was any thing but worn out, for I retired at forty with a mere competency."

"That," said I, "is not usually the case with men in business, especially if they succeed."

“ True,” returned he, “ and I did not fail. But I had no ambition, and was not given to luxury ; and though I had not a learned education, like you gentlemen of Oxford, I was fond of reading, and grew fonder, I believe, of printed books than manuscript accounts. So I read many curious stories, and one of them, concerning Diogenes (blackguard as he was), made me envy him.”

“ Indeed,” said I ; “ pray what was it ?”

“ Why, you know it is said of him, that walking once in a fair, where he saw mirrors and ribbons, fiddles and nut-crackers, hobby-horses and what not, exposed to sale, he exclaimed, ‘ Lord ! how many things are there in the world of which Diogenes hath no need ! ’ Now I thought this very wise, and longed to imitate him.”

“ In this I quite agree with you,” observed I.

He seemed pleased, and then asked if Jeremy Taylor was not thought a fine writer at Oxford.

I answered, “ Very fine ; but did you then study divinity as well as anecdotes in your counting-house ?”

“ Not exactly,” he replied ; “ but there are some fine things in Jeremy on contentedness and independence, and also another account of this same Diogenes, which struck me. It was quoted in Latin, but I found that one reason why Diogenes preferred himself to Aristotle was, that Aristotle was forced to dine when it pleased Philip ; he, when it pleased himself¹. This was after my own heart.”

“ And mine, too,” echoed I.

“ Then again,” continued Ofellus,—for so I must call him,—“ I was got hold of by I knew not what notions of pastorals, country contentments, and the pleasures of solitude. Upon these subjects, Izaak Walton, and one Zimmerman, a German, made me mad, though I never was a fisherman, and never lived alone. But with these always alongside of my great ledger, I could not bear the counting-house, and I had no sooner realized an annuity sufficient for myself and a housekeeper (for with all my pastoral feelings, I never was even in love, much less married), than I ran away to the country, to be happy by myself.”

“ And were you not so ?”

“ Far from it.”

“ The reason ?”

“ Why, for a long time I did not know ; though I found it out at last, by chancing to read of a man who had several houses, and complained that though he was always changing from one to another in search of happiness, he could not obtain what he sought. Upon which a friend told him, that unless in these changes he left himself behind, he never could find what he wanted. The fault was in himself, not his houses. This hit my case. I have had country

¹ Prandet Aristoteles quando Philippo libet, Diogenes quando Diogeni.

lodgings in five different counties ; I have been a recluse at the lakes, and they not being romantic enough, I suppose, I established myself on the Wye, but with no better success. I at first took to fishing, for Walton's sake, and then shut myself up for Zimmerman's ; but I had not patience to watch three hours for a bite, nor food enough in my own mind for solitary meditation. In short, I was ready to hang myself without knowing why, till on reflection I found out the secret."

"I long to know it," said I.

"Why, I discovered it was all owing to my thinking myself fit for a life of leisure when I was not. My whole time was on my hands, and my book-notions of its charms failing, I did not know what to do with myself."

"A good lesson for us all," observed I.

"Not for you," returned he, "for you have education, which I had not. For though I was fond of reading, it was not properly directed. I had much better have stuck to my ledger."

"You have, however, changed your habits it should seem. You have, at least, no signs of the blue devils you talked of."

"It is mainly owing," returned he, "to the daily walk which I told you I take to Wallingford and back. I found that all the fine writing in the world was thrown away upon a man that was not a fit subject for it, and that perpetual study, and even laborious employment, is the only thing left for it, with one who has no profession to tie him to the world, nor resources in his thoughts to enable him to live out of it. I found, too, that I got better and more practical notions of mankind in the market-place and coffee-room at Wallingford, than from Zimmerman ; to say nothing of news of the world, to which no man, not disgusted with it (say what he will), can be indifferent."

This pleased me, and I parted with my self-taught philosopher—who told me his name was Ryecroft—with something like regret. He took leave of me at the end of a lane leading to his house, to which, I must do him the justice to say, he invited me with sufficient earnestness ; but as I had to dine on the road, and meant to get to Reading that evening, I declined the invitation.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MY ADVENTURES IN A FISHING-HOUSE ON THE RIVER LAMBURN.

The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treach'rous bait.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Much Ado About Nothing*.

THE two rencontres I have recorded, with two such opposite characters as I met with, engaged my reflections for many a mile afterwards, till I reached Thatcham, a pleasant village on the Lamburn, which runs into the Kennet, both famous for fishing. This was about one o'clock, when, having been out five hours from breakfast, something whispered me, in terms not to be mistaken, that I wanted my noontide repast. Luckily for me, the landlord of the "Jolly Angler" public-house had received the same warning, for he was just sitting down to dinner, with his wife and children, in the cleanest of kitchens, when I entered it with all the freedom and confidence of a traveller who, though a pedestrian, knew he could pay as well as call for what he liked.

The Jolly Angler was one of those rural, neat, and pretty inns, which England alone presents to a traveller. It overhung the river; and under the sign appeared inscribed, "Excellent eels and trout all the season through; good fishing-rods, baits, and nets, supplied by Christopher Chubb."

As I said, I boldly walked into the kitchen with my knapsack on my shoulders, and found a table spread with very savoury eggs, just out of the pan, and pickled pork, which, to my appetite, excelled all the *ragouts* of an Apicius. To be sure, it was in the kitchen (and I had not yet dined in a kitchen), but the cloth and platters were perfectly clean, and I wistfully snuffed the steam of the viands.

The landlord having eyed my appearance,—not uncivilly, but with not much reverence,—did not choose to disturb himself from his dinner, upon which, though he had not walked ten miles, his senses seemed to fix as keenly as mine. He therefore, without rising from his wooden chair, which, as master of the house, had arms to it, asked me carelessly what I wanted, and whether I would not walk into the tap-room.

"I would willingly," said I, "wait in one of your pretty parlours, that hang over the water, till you get me a chicken, and some trout for dinner; but, to tell the truth, I am so famished, that, if you will give me leave, I would prefer taking a seat with you

here, and afterwards, perhaps, you will give me some negus in your parlour."

At the words chicken, trout, and negus, there was an evident change of looks, both in the landlord and his wife, and the latter, a sleek, buxom, cherry-cheeked dame, of perhaps five and thirty years, said with a smile,

"I am sure the gentleman speaks very politely; but, Lor bless me, he cannot surely demean himself to dine here with us."

"Deborah," said the landlord, "the gentleman knows best what suits him; and if he will take up with our dinner, being, as he says, very hungry, he is very welcome. I suppose, sir, you have come a-sporting to the Jolly Angler? and well may it be, for it is known, I may say, to half the kingdom, and even to the folks at Lunnon, who come in swarms when the season is on. You have got your gear, I suppose, in your knapsack? Now that's the sign of a true sportsman: that's what I like; and if the sun goes in, after your negus, I dare say I can shew you good entertainment on the river, as well as in the parlour."

"Aye, sir," added the dame, "and possibly enough to keep you till over to-morrow; for you know, husband, the gentleman who has the white bed, does not come back till next day."

Finding my reception so altered under the supposition that I was a sporting angler, and might be a permanent guest, I did not say any thing to undeceive them, but sat down, and fell to in good earnest, first ordering a tankard of foaming ale.

By what little shades of self-interest are we influenced in our conduct to one another! and yet are we all brothers of the same flesh and blood, made by the same hand.

A silence of some minutes ensued, while we dispatched the eggs and pickled pork, with a reinforcement of the former by Mrs. Chubb, together with the proper concomitants of potatoes, and excellent cheese and butter.

The tankard was soon emptied, and another filled at my desire. Nay, whether because pleased at the novelty of the scene, or with my companions themselves, I desired my glass of negus to be enlarged to a bowl, and shared by the company.

The landlord's heart opened. In truth, I believe neither he nor I ever made a better dinner. Pity that Fothergill had not seen his travelling disciple discussing this homely fare, and listening with unfeigned curiosity to mine host, who grew quite eloquent in praise of fishing and fishing-houses, and in particular as to the last, of the Jolly Angler.

When I, in return, praised his fare, and complimented Mrs. Chubb upon her cookery,

"Why, sir," said she, "I must say it did seem to go down well, and you were not above letting it."

“That’s all right, and according to natur,” said her husband. “Why you ate for all the world like a poor man.”

“And much good may it do you,” cried Mrs. Chubb, thinking, perhaps, of the white bed, vacant for two nights.

“But why,” asked I, not unwilling to hear Boniface’s sentences, “should not a rich man eat as well as a poor one? They are both men, and have the same Maker.”

“And that’s quite true,” said Mrs. Deborah. “Perhaps the gentleman has just taken orders; we have a many clergymen as comes a-fishing here.”

“And no more than they should,” chimed in Mr. Chubb, “considering who they came from; for the Postles were all fishers.”

“Still,” said I, “you have not told us why a rich man may not eat as heartily as a poor one?”

“God forbid he shouldn’t!” proceeded the host; “they have the same mouths, and the same——no, not the same stomachs, as I was going to say, because you see——But Deborah, hand me down the book, which will tell the gentleman what I meant better than I can myself.”

At this, taking the book from his wife, which I found was the precise old Walton, who had so misled Ryecroft, he presented it to me, very much dog’s-eared; and easily finding the passage, he observed,

“An angler like you, sir, no doubt knows all about this excellent book; next to the bible, I have heard say by Dr. P. himself (and I believe it), the most excellent book in all the world.”

“And who is Dr. P.?”

“The greatest brother of the angle in England. In fact this book belongs to him, though he always leaves it when he goes, till he comes again to enjoy it.”

Now I own, to my shame, I had not yet read a word of this old Izaak, who was such a favourite with everybody; but of course I did not choose to ruin my reputation by confessing it. However, I listened with great approbation to the passage, which was as follows:—

“Poor men, and those who fast often, have much more pleasure in eating than rich men and gluttons, that always feed before their stomachs are empty of their last meat and call for more; for by that means they rob themselves of that pleasure that hunger brings to poor men. And I do seriously approve of that saying, that you would rather be a civil, well-governed, well-grounded poor angler, than a drunken lord.”

Having read these words emphatically, with divers looks at his wife for support and approbation as he went along, (looks which she most dutifully obeyed), he continued,

“You see, sir, I was not without reason when I thought to com-

pliment you by saying, you ate like a poor man. So here's to ye, and I hope the negus is to your liking."

I assured him nothing could be better; when he went on to say, that the book was indeed a wonderful book, and had a deal more in it than concerned fishing, being almost about every thing that a man could like or care for, and for that matter, might have been written by a parson; at least there were many parsons who did not preach half such good sermons as there were even in the songs, which seemed made on purpose to make people good and happy.

"Perhaps the gentleman would like to hear one of them," said Mrs. Chubb; "and I am sure after such a nice treat as he has given us in this here negus (filling her glass), you ought to give it him; that is, if he should like it, not unless. Our Kit, sir," she proceeded, addressing herself to me, "knows them all by heart; and when the trout and eel feast is held here, as it is at Whitsuntide, he be always called upon by the gentlemen to dine and sing with them; and they say he beats our parish clerk all to nothing."

"O! Deborah," said the conscious husband (as if unwilling to have his merits revealed, yet not sorry for the disclosure), "you need not have said any thing about that; but if the gentleman would wish to hear the praises of angling, which, being so fond of the sport himself, no doubt he does, —"

I felt a little puzzled at this, but assured him nothing would please me more. Indeed I had begun to be highly entertained, and my curiosity was much moved. The honest landlord, therefore, having cleared his throat with another glass, and given me the book to follow the words, began:—

"Oh! the gallant fisher's life
It is the best of any;
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,
And 'tis beloved by many.

Other joys
Are but toys,
Only this
Lawful is,
For our skill
Breeds no ill,
But content and pleasure.

"In a morning up we rise
Ere Aurora's peeping,
Drink a cup to wash our eyes,
Leave the sluggard sleeping.

Then we go
To and fro,
With our knacks
Upon our backs,
To such streams
As the Thames,
If we have the leisure."

“There, sir,” said Mr. Chubb, stopping to take breath, “you see this is none of your drunken songs ; but, as Dr. P. says, contains a dale of morality. Not that I have any objection to a bit of a jolly song, just to keep up the pleasure of a meeting or club, for the good of a house ; but then it must not go farther than be merry and wise ; for, as Deborah knows, I allow no drunkenness at the Jolly Angler—indeed, I should lose my licence if I did.”

I deferred entirely to this reason for my host’s morality, and commended his song, particularly for the good sentiments it exhibited.

“Yes, sir,” said he, “for, as Dr. P. says, it is all a moral. There is first pleasure indeed, *but void of strife*, and therefore harmless ; then it breeds no ill, but enjoins content ; then it recommends early rising, and to leave the sluggard in bed ; and what consarns us landlords more, it recommends a morning cup.”

“Does Doctor P. particularly approve that ?” asked I.

“Not particularly a cup of ale,” replied Boniface ; “but then he always takes his tea and cold ham or eggs, as it may be, before he goes a-fishing, and that is equally for the good of the house.”

“Which is perhaps the principal moral of the song,” said I.

“Why you see, sir, all trades must live, and ours is not an easy one ; so many people to please. Sometimes a gentleman won’t come to a house, because one of an opposite party uses it, which is always the case when a town is divided between Whig and Tory. But the beauty of fishing is, that it has nothing to do with politics ; and all parties, if they are fond of the sport, which all ought to be, will forget themselves for the moment, and eat and drink and be merry, when they are tired and hungry, all the same ; which does a dale of good, as I say, to the landlords.”

“I suppose, then,” observed I, more and more amused, “that you and Mrs. Chubb are of no party ?”

“Why, as to Mrs. Chubb, I always say, women shouldn’t meddle with any thing that don’t consarn them, but mind their cooking, and washing, and children ; and, as to myself, my motto has always been, ‘handsome is, as handsome does.’ To be sure, in secret, I am for church and king, which is, I believe, as much as to say, a Tory ; but then, if a Whig gentleman should drive up to the door, and spend his money freely, as you may do, sir, or perhaps stay two or three days, to examine the beauty of the place, as you will, I hope, also do, I have no right to consarn myself with what he thinks of politics, any more than what Sir Harry Englefield, and other Roman Catholic gentlemen, thinks of religion, when they come here, as they often do, to eat a fish dinner in Lent. And so, sir, as I see the bowl is out (unless you should please to order another), and the sky is nice and cloudy, I will attend you, if you

please, up the river, and charge you nothing for attendance, but only for the boat."

"And what may that be?" asked I.

"Half-a-crown if you go alone; five shillings if I go with you."

"I thought you said nothing for attendance?"

"That is, I meant attendance upon *you*; but I shall have to mind the boat, you know."

By this time I had taken a pretty good measure of the manners and principles of the landlord of the Jolly Angler; and as I never had handled a rod in my life, and meant not to learn, at least on that afternoon, I felt rather embarrassed to get rid of this *quasi* engagement, which, though of the host's own making, I felt I had encouraged by my silence. It was, indeed, to his surprise and almost consternation, when I excused myself from the party, as I had a particular engagement at Reading that evening.

He stared; and his wife coming in at that moment, said it was very strange that a gentleman should not know his own mind, particularly as she had been up-stairs to get the white bed ready. I observed, too, that the landlord, in giving me my knapsack, handled it with an air of contempt, and even anger, observing, that there did not seem much tackle in it, and that if it had been but a little larger, he should have taken it for a pedlar's pack.

He recovered himself a little when I paid the bill, which would have done no discredit, in amount at least, to a London hotel.

CHAPTER XLV.

MORE ADVENTURES.—I MEET WITH A STILL MORE EXTRAORDINARY TRAVELLER THAN I HAVE YET SEEN.

Oh, master, if you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe. He sings tunes faster than you can tell money; he utters them as he had eaten ballads. He has songs for men and women of all sizes.—No milliner can so fit his customer with gloves.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Winter's Tale*.

"So much," thought I, on turning my back on mine host of the Jolly Angler—"so much for little landlords who profess morality and quote Walton."

I was not the less, however, in a frame of mind to be amused with an account of still farther lucubrations on the part of Mr. Chubb, in respect of my personal appearance, which, rather curiously, I learned from a brother knapsack like myself, who found me loitering on the road to Pangburne, on the Kennet side, a few miles from Thatcham.

This next acquaintance of mine appeared a real pedlar, whose strength of back filled me with respect, for his knapsack was a pack of at least a quarter of a hundred weight.

I was sitting, as he approached, on the parapet of one of the little bridges over the river (a resting-place I always choose, wherever I find it, for the sake of its pleasant prospect up and down a stream, and the reflections it inspires) when he came up and saluted me. Till then he had been singing like Autolycus in the play—

“Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a ‘.”

“Save you, sir, and good afternoon,” said he, resting his pack against the wall of the bridge.

“The same to you,” returned I; and we mutually surveyed each other.

There was something keen, or rather cunning in his eye, as he looked at me, and a sort of sardonic expression in the smile with which he said, “You have had a pleasant walk from Thatcham sir.”

As I was now used to these interruptions, I no longer stood upon my dignity to play the exclusive with my fellow vagabonds, so asked him how he knew I came from Thatcham?

“Oh, I heard of you in different places,” returned he. “A friend of mine, Dr. Firebrass, whom I saw on the Wallingford coach, as it stopt to water, told me I might overtake you, for you walked slow, though you were to get to Reading this evening, and had promised to attend his lecture.”

“I made no such promise,” said I, “though I may do it out of curiosity. But pray, who else may have told you of me?”

“Why I just stopt,” he answered, “at the Jolly Angler for a pint, and the landlord was describing you to two or three other guests in the tap-room; and as to his outer description, there is no mistaking you. I hope I don’t make too free, in resting my *pack* so close to yours.”

I did not much like the familiarity of being taken for a brother-pedlar; but, not much offended, I said, I supposed Mr. Chubb described something more than my mere outside; “may be, that I was a travelling merchant like yourself?”

“Not exactly so,” replied he, “though it was one of his many guesses.”

“Which were not over creditable, perhaps to my character?”

“Why, as to that, whatever they were, he allowed that you spent your money very freely, but said that all was not gold that glitters—I beg pardon again for being so free.”

¹ *Winter's Tale.*

"O!" cried I, "there's no occasion; I should really like to know what he thought I was, for he seemed so out of humour at his mistake in thinking me a gentleman sportsman come to fish, that he had begun to be discourteous before I left the house."

"Shall I tell you, and not make you angry?" asked the pedlar.

"By all means."

"Why, at first he thought you a Methodist parson going to some congregation; for, said he, 'them messengers of the elect, however plain and humble they travel in appearance, always pamper themselves, when they can, like a lord, and to be sure I hope he will have more mercy upon his penitent brethren than he had upon the fried eggs.' Upon this we all laughed."

"Well, what afterwards?"

"He then thought you a nobleman's valet, who had left his place, and was tramping it home on foot, but so accustomed to the luxuries of the steward's room, that you could not do without them, for ale would not satisfy you. His wife, however, refuted that, by saying, that when you paid the bill, you took out a purse full of gold, so could not be a valet out of place. If this was true, and you shewed your gold, I would take the liberty of advising you another time not to be so indiscreet; nobody knows who one meets at them public-houses, and some of the people who heard this might follow you on purpose to get at the purse. Did you really shew much gold?"

"Enough, I suppose," said I, "to pay expenses."

Here I put my hand into my breeches pocket, to ascertain the safety of my purse, which my companion observing, said he was glad to find I had not lost it; adding, however, that he thought I had better not carry too much money about me.

I thanked him for his caution, and asked if I had any other character with my good landlord?

"Why yes; but this beats the others in impudence, and really I dare not mention it."

"O! let's have it. It can hardly be worse."

"You must know, then, that whilst we were in the midst of this talk, a constable comes in with a kind of hue-and-cry paper, stating that the Wallingford bank had been robbed the night before—which indeed I knew—and offering a reward for the discovery of the thief. It also described the persons of the several strangers who had been in the town that evening. Among these was one in a sort of shooting-jacket, black stock, and a knapsack on his back supposed to be a soldier."

"That looks very like me," said I, somewhat amused, yet annoyed, for I thought I might get into trouble by it on the road, and I was not satisfied with the keen look and sneer which the pedlar assumed while he informed me that the uncharitable Chubb de-

clared to his guests he thought I must be the man. The pedlar himself evidently looked uncertain as to the point, and observed that I did not seem to like the intelligence.

"I am afraid it disturbs you, friend," said he "but of course it cannot be you."

"Gracious heaven!" cried I, "do I look so conscious? If innocence is disconcerted at being merely suspected, what must be the case of actual guilt?"

"What indeed?" said the pedlar, and he gave a significant shrug with his shoulders. "But I am only surprised," added he, "that I was not myself put into the Hue-and-Cry, for I was at Wallingford all day yesterday at the Lammas fair, and I sold many a pennyworth; in short, emptied my pack, and filled it again with my profits. Yet it would be wrong to suspect a hard-working, honest man on that account."

"Wrong indeed," answered I; "yet you gentlemen pedlars are everywhere, and must sometimes be exposed to suspicion. You must, however, see and know a great deal of the world."

"That we ought to do," rejoined he, "for we work hard for it. It is a laborious, but sometimes not an unpleasant life, which repays us often for our pains. We are admitted every where, and though they may not buy, every body is glad to see us, particularly the women (sometimes the mistresses, always the maids); and if we are reasonable—that is, charge not above twenty or thirty per cent. on goods—to a cook or housekeeper, we are pretty sure of a tit-bit and a cup, besides the profit. O! it's a great deal better than tailoring all day, with one's knees up to one's chin; or bending over a desk, driving a quill, or even dinning *bonus, bona, bonum*, into a stupid boy."

"I cry you mercy," said I; "I see you are a man of education, which I did not know you gentlemen of the pack were."

"Neither are we all," replied he, "but I perhaps am an exception. For I was not born to carry this camel's hump about with me. Mine has been a varied life."

"Your adventures, I should think, must be very amusing, had we time and a convenient place to hear them."

And I began to think how Fothergill would rejoice in such an opportunity to gratify his favourite speculations.

"A hot evening sun, on a stone bridge," answered the pedlar, "does not give much encouragement to a long story; but among the osiers there on the bend of the river, on this side Pangburne, there is an honest public-house, called the Eel-pie House, where the ale is excellent, and the landlady civil, not to mention a comely young daughter who serves the customers; and if you will stand treat for a tankard, I should have no objection, as you are so curious, to tell you some of my history."

This exactly falling in with my scheme of travelling, I agreed, and was led, nothing loth, to the sign of "The West Country Barge, or Eel-pie House, by Sarah Snow, widow."

Here, on our arrival at a little garden gate, which led to the house, my friend began another song of Autolycus, and in no mean voice sung out,

"Will you buy any tape,
Or lace for your cape,
My dainty duck, my dear-a?
Any silk, any thread,
Any toys for your head,
Of the newest and finest wear-a?
Come to the pedlar;
Money's a medler,
That doth utter all men's ware-a'."

This address brought out the landlady's daughter, a pretty lass, of about seventeen, who came with seeming gladness to the gate to let us in.

"Ah! George," said she, "I thought it was you."

She then told us mother was gone milking, and justified, as to comeliness, all that was said of her by the pedlar. Him she at first treated with familiar smiles, denoting old, not to say intimate acquaintance, though she afterwards addressed him by his surname of Mr. Handcock; and Mr. Handcock introduced me to her in form as Miss Betsy Snow. In doing this, he remarked that she deserved her name, if only from the whiteness of her skin, a compliment with which, though hit called up a blush, she seemed far from displeased. Nor was her pleasure less when he told her that he had matched her ribbons at Wallingford fair, and brought her the fairings he had promised her. They were the prettiest fringed gloves, he said, in the world, and only one other pair, the fellow to them, in the whole fair,¹ and these instantly bought up by Lady Blackstone; an intimation which added, seemingly, to Miss Snow's complacency.

He then proposed the tankard I was to treat him with; but I (somewhat more delicate), having dined well, asked if I could not have some tea, while he drank his ale? Miss Betsy said yes. Mr. Handcock declared there was none better to be had in all Reading; and the kettle announcing by its singing that the water was ready, it was in a few minutes served in a neat enough room, with a window to the water.

Here, while our respective beverages went on, I listened to my companion's promised adventures.

¹ *Winter's Tale.*

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PEDLAR'S STORY.

Here's more matter for a hot brain. Every lane's end, every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Winter's Tale*.

MR. Handcock commenced his recital thus :—

“ I told you I was not born to carry a pack ; nor indeed to do many things which (God help me !) I have done.”

Here he gave a sort of sigh, which, however, soon vanished.

“ And yet,” continued he, “ my birth had not much to boast of; though it was a high birth too, for it was in the loftiest garret in the good town of Reading, where my mother enacted the part and profession of a midwife, while my father sold coals and potatoes in a cellar below. You will be surprised, therefore, at my appearing to disdain my pack ; but the truth is, I was, as you called me, a gentleman of education, if reading a great quantity of trash, and worse than trash, be education. It corrupted me, indeed, to the backbone, but it gave me much knowledge of the differences of the lots of men.

“ You may suppose that my father could not defray the charge of thus schooling me ; and, in fact, till twelve or thirteen, I could neither write nor read, but was employed in helping my father in weighing out coals, in which I fear the weights were not always so true as they ought to have been. I would willingly have helped my mother, too, in her vocation, if she had permitted ; for I was a handy lad, ready for any and all work, and noticed by everybody for the smartness with which I ran of errands, and carried notes and messages between the officers in our country quarters and their sweet-hearts, by which I got many a sixpence.

“ I also helped the journeyman of a neighbouring apothecary, in delivering bottles of doctor's stuff without breaking them.

“ Nobody of my inches could be compared with me at foot-ball, and when not employed in any of these ways, I rambled about the fields and lanes with other blackguards, with whom I am afraid I was guilty of robbing a few orchards ; but that's a trifle—I wish I could say that was the worst thing I ever did in my life.”

Here Mr. Handcock began to look serious again ; so, to comfort him, I said, I dared to say these were only a few youthful pranks, which might easily be forgiven.

“ Well,” said he, “ it's no use thinking ; what is done is done, and so I shall go on, by telling you that, among other things for

which I was remarkable, I had an excellent voice and ear for music, and a good memory, and took to learning by heart and singing songs, so as to attract the notice of our parish clerk, who, being in want of just such a voice as mine, enlisted me in his music gallery, and gave me a few coppers every Sunday for singing psalms."

"Psalms!" exclaimed I.

"Yes; and well sung too; for my voice was a finer treble than any one's else, and I became admired by the whole congregation, and the parson himself, who, wanting just such a boy to clean knives and shoes, bargained with my father to keep me in board and give me a suit of clothes once in two years, for which I was to do every thing he and the maids desired me."

"Had he many maids?"

"Two; but I am not come to them yet."

"But what of the doctor?"

"To do him justice, he was very pious and good, upon the whole, though there was very little meat in the potatoe pies on which he used to feed us. But he was really a religious person, prayed a great deal, and made us pray too, which first opened my mind to the notion that there was such a thing as religion."

"Good!" said I, "and I hope good came of it."

"Not much, I fear, for I soon forgot it."

Here the pedlar once more looked grave, but proceeded.

"My master, who, as I said, was really good-natured, finding me, though so sharp, utterly ignorant, made his clerk, who kept a day school, take me among his scholars, without charging any thing for it, though he docked me of the Sunday coppers which he used to give me for singing. I made progress, however, and could soon read, and became so fond of it, that my master presented me with a Bible, which he got cheap from the Bible Society, and which, together with the 'Whole Duty of Man,' he used to make me read to him by the hour, till I own I was tired, and it was a relief to me to clean knives.

"Not content with this, he used to make me read one, two, or three sermons a day, upon true faith, and things about mysteries, as they were called, to be believed but not understood, and which, for not understanding, he punished me by mulcting me of my scanty dinner.

"This drove me to schemes of retribution, and as Mrs. Biddy, the cook, always locked up the pantry, I own I thought it but fair to right myself, and by the help of a friend a year or two older, a blacksmith's apprentice, I got a false key to the pantry, which I visited, not only when I was unjustly deprived of my dinner, but whenever I found myself hungry, which was not seldom, after having had it.

"This did not go on long; for the frequent defalcations could

not escape Mrs. Biddy, who taxed me with it, and though I denied it stoutly when she complained to the doctor, he would not believe me, but turned me away in disgrace. What was worse, he would not believe me either when I denounced the cook in return, for having, as was true, given a plate of cold beef to a man with whom she kept company. I was called a wicked dog, who would certainly come to the gallows in this world, and go to the devil in the next. For the sake of my voice, however, I was allowed still to sing in the church, notwithstanding my delinquencies.

“ I returned again to be an errand-boy, only with more accomplishments, for I could now read and write ; though I know not if that did me good, for it got me the place of shop-boy at a circulating library, much resorted to by both sexes in the town, and the gentry in the neighbourhood.”

“ Could that do you harm ?” asked I.

“ In point of comfort, no ; in its consequences, yes ; for in the intervals of serving books to the shop visitors, I read them myself ; and as they were all novels, I am loth to say what damage they did to my mind. The very best of them filled me with notions of intrigue, swindling, corrupt pleasures, and successful profligacy. Not one word about religion : indeed, in those I read, there did not seem to be such a thing in the world, so that I soon forgot what little the doctor had forced into me. It is certain I never thought afterwards of sermons, or the ‘ Whole Duty of Man.’

“ This was the more dangerous, because from the fascinations thrown about these pictures in the books I read, by style, wit, and glowing description, my virtue was gone before I knew it was in danger.”

“ Your virtue,” said I, laughing, “ which you had acquired in delivering coals with false weights, robbing orchards and pantries, and carrying on intrigues between officers and their sweethearts ! But pray, may I ask who the authors were who so delighted and so corrupted you ?

“ Those that most engaged me,” replied he, “ were *Gusman d'Alfarache*, or the *Spanish Rogue* ; *Lazarillo di Tormes*, not much better ; and the histories of Don Raphael and Scipio, in *Gil Blas*. Upon my word, that Spain must be a fine field for the profession of a rascal. It was *Gil Blas*, however, I may say, that gave me a taste for the wandering life I took to. Its changing scenes, its actors and actresses, gallants and ladies, sharpers and merry beggars, independence of travelling, and dinners under hedges, absolutely disqualified me for settled occupation. No wonder that I ran away.”

“ Ran away ! What, from your entertaining books ?”

“ O ! no ; from the tailor's shop-board, where next I embarked. For one advantage I derived from psalm-singing was this,—a top—

ping tailor in the town, very evangelical, was so struck with it, that he offered to take me 'prentice, if I would sing hymns to him of an evening. This I was persuaded to accept, but soon found my usual longing for liberty ; and as there was no other way of cancelling my indentures, one fine morning I bolted. But it was *Gil Blas*, I verily believe, which produced this disposition to get loose ; and lucky for me that the examples I read in him, and others of the same kidney, did not make me turn robber, or swindler, or, at best, a common beggar."

"Like another Reginald Pole Carew," said I.

"For heaven's sake, do not mention that book, for it certainly went farther to turn me into a vagabond than any other. Though even, without a printed recommendation, a beggar's life does not seem altogether without enjoyment. I have observed in them, amidst their rags, a mirth and merriment, which carelessness of all future evils alone can give ; and while I sing the famous beggar's ballad of Frank Davison, made in the merry days of Charles the Second, I cannot help agreeing with his view of this singular class."

"Can you give a specimen of it?"

"Yes :

'Bright shines the sun, play, beggars, play,
Here's scraps enough to serve to-day.
What noise of viols is so sweet,
As when our merry clappers ring?
What mirth doth want when beggars meet?
A beggar's life is for a king.
Eat, drink, and play, sleep when we list,
Go where we will—so stocks be miss'd.
Bright shines the day, play, beggars, play,
Here's scraps enough to serve to-day.'

"Careless enough," observed I.

"There is great deal more of it, all to the same tune, and it had its effect upon me, I assure you : but what chiefly influenced me to be a knight of the pack, was Autolycus, in Shakspeare. O! he was a first-rate fellow!"

"If you mean the pedlar in the *Winter's Tale*," replied I, "he was a first-rate scoundrel."

I said this sternly, for I really now began to eye my new acquaintance with something very like suspicion. Perhaps he perceived it, for he instantly returned,

"O! I am aware of that ; but, as in the other instances I mentioned, I could separate the bad from the good. I hope you do not suspect me of following the evil parts of his character. Why, he was a downright thief, and picks a pocket on the stage : God preserve me from such wickedness! It was only the agreeable parts of Autolycus that I felt disposed to admire."

"Pray, what are they?" said I, drily ; to which he answered,

“His extraordinary ascendancy over men’s imaginations and credulity, which must have been a never-failing source of amusement, and even of study—the study of human nature. I wish I could remember the passage, but I have got the play in my pack; I am seldom without it.” So saying, he unlocked his bag, and producing the play, turned to what he seemed to read with unction :

“ ‘ Ha, ha ! what a fool honesty is, and trust his sworn brother, a very simple gentleman ! I have sold all my trumpery. Not a counterfeit stone, not a ribbon, glass, pomander, brooch, table-book, ballad, knife, tape, glove, shoe-tye, or horn-ring, to keep my pack from fasting : they throng, who shall buy first ; as if my trinkets had been hallowed, and brought a benediction to the buyer.’ ”

“He must have had a rare trade of it, that Autolycus, and this I own was what chiefly made me turn pedlar ; for if men will be gulls, I have no business to prevent them.”

“Excellent morality,” said I.

“But then he sung so well,” continued Handcock, “that everybody must have been fascinated, and that alone would make people buy.

‘Lawn as white as driven snow ;
Cyprus, black as e’er was crow :
Gloves, as sweet as damask roses ;
Masks for faces, and for noses.’

And so on.

“Well, I never came to a farm-house, but by singing I was asked in, sold my wares, set people a-talking, and got at their secrets. O ! with your curiosity, the life would suit you to a T. Perhaps I may yet see you one of us. At any rate, you see it is a pleasant life, and you cannot wonder that I shirked the tailor.”

I own I now did not know what to make of Mr. Autolycus Handcock. That he might by *possibility* be honest, I would not deny ; that, by more than possibility, he was a rogue, was I thought clear ; and I began to consider how I might shake him off. Other suspicions came into my head. It was equally clear that his attentions to the fair girl of the house boded no good to the latter ; she evidently looked up to him as a superior being, and though he was above forty years old, had a copper nose, the effect of drink, a furrowed cheek, and a pimpled skin, tanned almost black with travelling in the sun, she was evidently so pleased with his ready talk, his apparent openness, his merriment, his songs, and his tales, and above all, with his unceasing compliments to herself, that all disparity, whether of age or person, seemed long to have ceased in her mind, and if they did not marry, it was evidently not her fault. Her mother, a decent woman, had now joined us, and I would have given much to have known how to warn her of her daughter’s dan-

ger ; but, stranger as I was to both, I could not manage it ;—and I not only felt that any thing I could say to the pedlar himself would be laughed at, but he now declared his intention of staying where he was all night, a thing which I found he had not unfrequently done before.

In the end, what he did by choice, I was compelled to do against my will, for I too was forced to remain, by what there is no answering for—the elements.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE UNLOOKED-FOR CATASTROPHE OF THE PEDLAR.—MY OWN UNEASINESS THEREON,
AND MY FARTHER PROGRESS IN MY TOUR.

Who's there besides foul weather?
One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Let the great Gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipt of justice!—SHAKESPEARE.—*King Lear*.

WE had loitered so long over our tea and ale, not to mention our discourse, that it was now near eight o'clock, and I had full six miles more to accomplish to get to Reading.

This would have been nothing in a summer evening, had it been even farther advanced ; and the bean-flower, which perfumed the whole country, would have only made the journey a sweeter Midsummer-night's dream. But the sultry day began suddenly to produce what it generally does when the clouds have sufficiently conglomerated—a storm ; and this one came on with peculiar force. It first began with a rushing of wind from the north, which, though at first only in a sort of melancholy moan, gained force with every minute, and at length swept along the valley, as if it would tear up every thing, by the roots.

Soon it thundered from the south ; the lightning was incessant and dreadful ; for already had it split several trees close to us. At length the whole mass of clouds poured down in cataracts, as if the treasure-house in which the psalmist supposed them to be heaped had been suddenly opened.

Yet even these effects of the storm were not so disheartening as its long continuance. For its cessation, which we looked for every ten minutes, became hopeless, and the deep darkness at every interval of the lightning, by rendering our situation more uncertain, made it more fearful. The flashes, too, had now disclosed that the river had burst its banks, and was rapidly approaching the walls of our low-built mansion. This completed our terror.

Altogether, neither before nor since have I ever remembered such a war of elements; and had I been an ancient pagan, I should have thought I had seen Jupiter himself, darting his thunderbolts and directing the whirlwind. Often afterwards have I called it to mind, in reading the sublime passages that describe the power of the true Jupiter, Jehovah, over these his stupendous instruments—

“The waters saw thee, O God! the waters saw thee and were afraid.”

“The air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad.”

“Thy lightnings shone upon the ground, the earth trembled and quaked; the very foundations of the hills shook because he was wroth.”

“He bowed the heavens, and came down, and it was dark under his feet.”

“He rode upon the Cherubims, and came flying upon the wings of the wind.”

“He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him, with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him.”

What we were to do was now a question, for the Eel-pie House was, I thought, in a fair way of being drowned with all its inhabitants, and I proposed to sally forth to avoid that fate, though to meet another. But the landlady, who was much the most collected of us all, said she had experienced this before, and the river never could rise higher than a deep channel made for a backwater, about twenty yards from the house, which carried it off.

This consoled us; but what most struck me was, that the reckless Mr. Handcock, all day so bold and flippant, seemed more affected with terror than the rest. He was absolutely appalled. At every flash of the lightning he blinked, and begged that all the shutters of the house might be fast closed. As the thunder broke over our heads, he turned pale and trembled; and at some of the peals, peculiarly terrific from being close to us, he cried out, as if in pain, “Oh! God, be merciful!”

Presently the chimney, struck with lightning, came down with a crash of horror, and he exclaimed, with a terror of features and a trembling of limbs which I never shall forget, that the day of judgment was come.

The poor, trembling Betsy, more frightened than ever at this, clasped him with her arms, and screamed in agony. His own was scarcely less, and in rising in agitation from his seat, something fell either from it, or his person, with a loud jingle, on the floor.

Judge my astonishment, when I picked it up, to find it was my purse, which, it may be recollected, I had felt safe in my pocket upon the bridge, where I had first met Handcock.

Though the continuation of the storm allowed little time for reflection, still less for accusation, I had not now a doubt in my own mind that the fellow was a thief, and had robbed me on the bridge where we had been close neighbours, and his horror at Autolycus for picking a pocket did any thing but refute the supposition. His

¹ Psalms, 18-77-97.

present terror indeed shewed that he had some notion of the vengeance of heaven ; but that by no means exempted him from so well-founded a suspicion.

Be that as it might, the lightnings did not prevent my claiming the purse as mine, and to prove it, I named its contents—twenty-seven guineas—which proved correct. At any rate, the landlady said it was not her's, and upon my putting it to Handcock to know if it was his, that accomplished person, with eyes up-raised, declared that it seemed all a dream how it came there, and that it must have worked out of my own pocket and lodged upon his chair before it fell.

The landlady said it was very likely ; and as the pedlar was too frightened to play the bully, and I too glad to have escaped from such a loss, I thought it best to say no more about it then.

The storm having now lasted three hours, with different degrees of violence, began at last to lull. The thunder ceased, the waters, as the landlady had foretold, had gone off in another direction, and the wind, instead of bellowing, had subsided again into a melancholy moan.

I began then, late as it was, to think of prosecuting my journey ; but this was not unreasonably opposed by Mrs. Snow, who said, what seemed true enough, that the waters must be out so as to prevent a man, even in the day-time, from proceeding on his way, and to make it in the night, impossible ; that it would be one or two o'clock before I could get to Reading, and nobody would be up ; that she had an excellent spare bed, and would get something for supper to comfort us after our fright.

All this appeared so reasonable, that I was disposed to comply ; my only doubt was, what was to become of the honest Handcock, as the bed I was to have would have been occupied by him had I not been there. This proceeded from any thing, I fear, but regard. Truth is, I did not like the thought of any bed at all in so lone a place, with a gentleman for my close neighbour, so formed, as he evidently was, upon the models of Autolycus and the wandering sharpers of *Gil Blas*.

On the other hand, to sit up all night with this said gentleman, who had just picked my pocket, and knew that I must be convinced of it, was no pleasant alternative. Even the women of the house, with whom he was so intimate, did not appear to me, on that account, in the most favourable light ; and the man himself, his fear of heaven over, appeared sullen, dogged, and thoughtful. He looked out at the weather several times, saying that, as he knew the country, he thought he would be off, notwithstanding the waters.

This again, did not delight me ; for what was to prevent him returning, with some fellow-pedlars, or fellow-thieves, to labour in their vocation ? Any way, there was dilemma, though in the end it

was settled that we should have supper first, and Handcock should afterwards seek his fortune abroad, or stay within, as whim or the weather decided. For myself, I postponed the question of going to bed, which was to abide the event of circumstances ; and, as my mysterious friend did not choose to face the night abroad, and there was no bed for him within doors, I passed two hours more in uncertainty.

From this I was delivered by an incident, as unexpected by me, as I dare say it will be by the reader. Our supper over, the woman asked the pedlar to sing, to which he said he was not inclined, for he had lost his spirits, though he knew not what was the matter with him. They then asked for one of his merry stories, particularly about the man who was hanged for breaking open his father's shop to rob the till, and firing at his brother, who came to resist it.

For this, he said, he was still less in a humour : it was too shocking ; and he fell into a long reverie, which I watched with some anxiety ; for I really began to apprehend the worst of such a man, and swore within myself that I would never make acquaintance with a pedlar again.

In this state of things there had been a silence of several minutes, when Betsy, with a face of alarm, declared she heard somebody opening the little garden gate which led to the house. Her mother said it was only the wind, but the girl was right ; for we presently heard footsteps, not of one, or even two men, but seemingly those of a file of soldiers.

On hearing them, Handcock turned deadly pale, and exclaimed, " By G—— this is for me," and he started up to try to escape, which he did as far as the kitchen, the outer door of which was now beset, as well as that of our room. There was violent knocking at both, and the landlady, who, I must again do her the justice to say, preserved her presence of mind, asked firmly what was wanted.

" Nothing against yourself," answered a voice, " but we have a warrant to search your house ; so open the door, or we must break it open."

" You need not do that," said the landlady. " There—you may enter, but do not ill-use us."

" Not a bit of it," said the man who had spoken before, " provided you deliver up Handcock, the pedlar, who we know harbours here, and whom we have a warrant to arrest! "

Saying this, he and four myrmidons began the search, eyeing me with a curiosity I by no means liked.

" That's not he, Hoskyns," said the constable, looking at the warrant ; " why, everybody knows George Handcock, the pedlar."

At this moment Handcock, in despair, made a rush from the kitchen, and endeavoured to force through the parlour, but was intercepted by the stout constable, who, aided by his followers, soon

subdued, handcuffed, and carried him to a cart which waited for them at the garden gate. The constable, however, came back and demanded his pack, which might contain, he said, much information ; and then, upon my inquiring the crime of which Handcock was accused, he for the first time told us, it was for having, with others, broken open and robbed the Wallingford Bank.

The grief and astonishment of his female friends was seemingly as sincere, as it certainly appeared great, and I entirely abandoned the uncharitable thoughts which, though faintly, and but for a moment, I had entertained of them. The cool-headed Mrs. Snow contented herself with saying, "Who would have thought it ! God only knows our hearts !" But poor Betsy went into violent hysterics, which lasted long ; and on recovering from them her mother put her to bed.

All thought of my own rest was now at an end. I began to think the house I was in ill-fated, and wished to quit it as soon as possible. Indeed, I was not without tremors in regard to myself, for the description of my person, black stock and knapsack, in the Hue-and-Cry, ran in my head in a manner any thing but pleasant. I scarcely, therefore, waited for the dappled dawn, but paying my bill, which was far more reasonable than that of the affronted Mr. Chubb, I sallied forth from the West Country Barge and Eel-pie House, to regain the high road to Reading ; nor did I slacken my pace, or feel thoroughly comfortable, till the pretty towers and spires of St. Giles, St. Mary, and St. Lawrence, rose to my view.

Such, and often so unfortunate, it is for a man, however innocent, to fall, even unwittingly, into bad company.

The sight of the good town of Reading, and the proof my safety gave me that I was not pursued, made me recover my spirits. Indeed, as I was innocent, it would have been a shame not to have done so, for all nature seemed to breathe happiness, not the less because the beauty of the morning formed a glorious contrast to the desolation of the preceding night.

This variety in the weather, which occurs so often in our variable climate, almost atones for its imperfections ; for though sometimes the sky frowns even to fearfulness, no one can answer how long it may last. Sir William Temple, therefore, was right in resting his defence of our weather, notwithstanding fogs, rain, and darkness, upon the possibility of our passing some part of every day out of doors. How different this from the unremitting heats and rains, and interminable frosts, of many other parts of the world.

I particularly felt this when, remembering the havoc of the night—the marks of which strewed my way for many a mile—I contrasted it with the golden morning in which I now journeyed. With *Tamora* I exclaimed,

“ The birds chaunt melody in every bush ;
The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun ;
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground.”

My fears of pedlar troubles being thus relieved, I never had a happier walk, and called lustily for breakfast when shewn into the gentlemen travellers' room at the notorious Berkshire sign of the Black Bear.

Here, however, my tranquillity was again a little disturbed ; for not only, for my sins, was this eternal Hue-and-Cry pasted upon a board, hung up in the room, but I found all the gentlemen travellers, waiters, and two or three attorney's clerks, who generally breakfasted at the house, occupied with the robbery at Wallingford, and the arrest of Handcock, who was then actually under examination in the magistrates' chamber.

Had I known that my quondam friend was to have been moved to Reading, it certainly would not have been the town I should have breakfasted at that morning. However, I had no help for it, and thought myself lucky, whether from pride or convenience, to have taken my knapsack from my shoulders before I entered the place. Putting on, therefore, an unconscious countenance, I sat down quietly to my meal, and listened to the conversation.

The attorney's clerks were all very fluent and garrulous on the subject, and I found had been informed that there was an accomplice of Handcock with him at the Eel-pie House when he was taken, and they blamed the constable for not taking him into custody also, especially as he, too, was a brother pedlar, if not a brother thief, traced from the Jolly Angler at Thatcham, where he had shewn a purse of gold, and treated the whole house, which shewed that the gold could not have been honestly come by.

This, thought I, is acquiring a knowledge of the world with a vengeance ; and I became a little uneasy. Presently, however, my ear caught the name of Firebrass. “ Depend upon it, that reformer,” said one of the clerks, as he gulped down his tea, “ is at the bottom of this. How many robberies has he not instigated by his rascally lectures.”

“ I don't agree with you, Styles,” said a brother clerk. “ What you call rascally, I call enlightened ; and robbery, as Firebrass says, may not *per se* be a crime against the law of nature. All must depend upon the circumstances of the case.”

“ And pray, Hopkins,” replied Styles, “ what justified the pedlar for breaking open the Wallingford Bank ?”

“ There you go again,” returned Hopkins. “ How do we know that he broke open the bank ? The poor man is only now under examination, and yet you have already found him guilty, and, no doubt, hanged him in your own mind, because he is a poor pedlar.

Had he been the rich mayor, who shot the man last week for merely coming in at his window, and it was found justifiable homicide, he would, by you, be at once acquitted. See what it is to be a damned Tory !”

“And you,” replied Styles, “would let every robber go free, provided the person he robbed had a title, or was richer than himself. See what it is to be a damned Whig !”

“Let’s ask Mr. Jellybrand,” said Hopkins, “what he thinks of the question.”

“I know no more what the question is,” said a staid and sensible-looking person, “than you seem to do yourselves ; but if you ask me my opinion of you two, I think you are a couple of block-heads.”

At this the gentlemen travellers, or as, near London, they are called, the commercial gentlemen, laughed heartily, in which I could not help joining, though unwilling to bring myself into notice, especially among lawyers.

Another man of law, however, now came in, straight from the magistrates’ chamber, and told us that Handcock had implicated Dr. Firebrass, the lecturer on political economy, in the robbery at Wallingford.

“That’s the best news I have heard yet,” cried Styles ; “I hope it’s true.”

“I hope not,” said Hopkins. “But Firebrass is too prudent a man, even if he was not too high principled, to commit a robbery.”

“But he may instigate others,” responded Styles, “which is quite as bad.”

“What was the case ?” asked Jellybrand, who seemed to have much weight with the young men, being, as I was afterwards told, the managing clerk of their master.

“This,” said the new-comer. “A written paper was found in Handcock’s pack, signed by Firebrass, whose hand-writing was proved, which ran thus :—‘Being *applied to* for my opinion, whether it is lawful for a destitute man, or one of inferior condition, to help himself out of the superfluities of another superior to himself, I hold, from undeniable truths of the law of nature and the equality of mankind, that he may so act, *if he pleases, and thinks it expedient*, without being guilty of a crime. But of the expediency, he himself, and he only, is to judge.’”

“A very convenient doctrine,” said Jellybrand, “and likely to do a great deal of good. No wonder the doctor has established a sect, which daily spreads, and has such disciples as Hopkins. But how does this implicate him in the robbery at the bank ?”

“Aye ; make out that if you can,” said Hopkins. “Depend upon it, the law cannot reach him.”

“It has at least excited suspicion,” said he from the court, whose

name I found was Catchpole; "for Handcock being asked, who had required this opinion from the doctor, and how he came by it, first prevaricated, and then refused to answer; so he is remanded, and Firebrass is ordered to attend. Moreover, fifty pounds of the bank paper were also found in his pack, which he said he had taken in the way of his trade."

"And why not?" asked Hopkins. "If he or Firebrass are convicted, they will die martyrs to the tyranny of the laws."

"They both deserve to be hanged," said Styles.

"I should tell you, however," proceeded Catchpole, "that the person who was with Handcock when he was arrested is also to be apprehended, if he can be found; for though Handcock did not know his name, he let out that he was acquainted with Firebrass, and was proceeding hither on purpose to attend his lectures."

This completely decided my plan of proceeding, and altered my design of remaining a day or two at Reading, which I found was no place for me. As soon, therefore, as the lawyers had paid for their breakfasts and retired, I did the same; for I waited their retreat, not liking to shew my knapsack to people who studied the Hue-and-Cry. When gone, however, I took it off the peg on which I had hung it, and, in order to avoid danger, resolved to make it part company with my shoulders for a time, and proceed per coach, if I could find one, to the next town I meant to visit. This was about seven miles off, and I luckily succeeded, as what was called the Forest coach was just setting off. Bidding, therefore, adieu to Reading almost before I had seen it, I took the road to Oakingham, in Windsor Forest.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

I FALL IN WITH ANOTHER LANDLORD, VERY DIFFERENT FROM HIM OF THE JOLLY ANGLER.

My crown is in my heart, not on my head,
Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,
Nor to be seen; my crown is call'd content,

SHAKSPEARE.—*Henry VI.*

Are you a courtier an't like you

Winter's Tale.

WINDSOR forest! Ah! dear and delightful region! seat of my youth, and always of happiness! where I have wandered, careless of restraint, a votary of nature, through paths, and fields, and woods, literally strewn with flowers! Where, "under the shade of *not* melancholy boughs," I have lost, but not neglected "the creeping hours of time!" Ah! blissful retreat, where in delicious solitude

(to me delicious from being satiated with crowds) I have wooed and found the not unwilling Muse, who gave me gifts, which far

“Outshone the wealth of Ormus or of Ind!”

Ever didst thou soothe and restore my mind to health, when scorched by ambition, or plunged too deeply in reckless pleasure.

Yes! beautiful forest! haunt of retired study and holy contemplation, it was thou who first taught me there were things even in this world more to be coveted than the gifts of fortune or the fascinations of power.

I hail thee, therefore, with joy! hail this reminiscence of my first acquaintance with thee, which this epoch of my life now presents!

To quit this flight, and go on with my narration in plain prose, I was set down by the coach at the Royal Oak, a favourite sign of mine, notwithstanding the profligacy of the prince who endowed it with that title.

Am I right or wrong in thinking that, in a journey like mine, which may be truly called “sentimental,” pleasure, or its reverse, may in some sort be kindled by the associations thrown about the signs of the houses where we stop? Thus, the Royal Oak, for its aristocratic character; the White Hart, for its elegance; the Talbot, for the notions it gives of courage and fidelity; the Rose and Crown, for its historical interests; the Hare and Hounds, for its sporting recollections; the Green Man, or Robin Hood, for the romance of archery: all these for a moment inspire you—at least they inspire *me*—with a pleasing dream. While the Bull’s Head, the Bear, the Pack Horse, the Windmill, the Punch Bowl, or the Rummer, involve one’s thoughts in nothing but coarseness. I have carried this feeling so far as to expect to see the landlords, and even the waiters and chambermaids, in some measure, by their appearance and manners, accord with their signs. In this I have been disappointed so venture not to recommend it.

Yet in this instance my system told, for the landlord of the Royal Oak was highly aristocratic, and, in compliment to his sign, I found more than one copy of Boscobel or the escape of Charles II, on the tables of the house. He talked, too, with the affection and respect he deserved, of George the Third, whom he honoured for many virtues, but particularly for his love of hunting, and encouraging Ascot races. He therefore had his picture in every room, together with that of Lord Hinchinbroke, the then Master of the Buckhounds, and sundry of the best race-horses, some alone and quiet, some running with others. In short, it was evident that, if not a jockey, he had all the *esprit de corps* of the stable about him. In fact, I found I was in the middle of the King’s hunt, which, with the neighbourhood of Ascot, infused into the atmosphere an air of politeness and loyalty greater than ever I had yet met with.

This, and the good treatment of the host, who did not disdain coach passengers, whatever he might do by pedestrians and pedlars, put me at ease, and the delightful pastoral appearance of the surrounding country, set off by the beauty of the season, made me resolve to dedicate a few days to the study of what was

“ At once the Muses’ and the monarch’s seats.”

Could I think of Pope, and be in the neighbourhood of his cradle at Binfield, where

“ He lisped in numbers, for the numbers came,”

and not take a walk to see it before dinner? My landlord, who was the cicerone of this classical region, and a great admirer of Pope, whenever he had an interval of leisure from his duties in the cellarage or the stable to read him, recommended it, and shewed me the road, in his way to “Squire Neville’s,” as he called him, of Billingbere, in whose service he had been bred, as he said, from a boy, and who had helped his promotion to be landlord of the Royal Oak.

On the road, which passed through the most beautiful woodland scenery I had ever beheld, we had a conversation that might be called refined, for a brewer of ale and vendor of mutton chops.

“ Quite a genius, that Mr. Pope,” observed the landlord, as we set out.

“ Quite,” echoed I.

“ Yet they say he was a queer man to look at—twisted a hundred different ways ; though this, to be sure, has nothing to do with larning. ’Tis the head-piece as does all.”

“ Quite right again,” said I.

“ Now I,” continued the landlord, whose name was Gayford, “ may say without vanity, I hope, that I am a far properer man to look at than Mr. Pope was, for I am six feet high, and can lift a sack of malt ; and yet if I was to scratch my head from year’s end to year’s end, as he seems by his portrait to be always a doing, I could never make one of them verses, which, as I have heard tell, he could make when he was quite a little boy. La! Sir, what a pretty thing all that is about Loddon being once a nymph, but turned into a river. I know it’s all what the poets call an invention ; for I have gone over Loddon bridge a thousand times, and such a thought never came into my head, till Mr. Pope put it there¹. ”

¹ “ She said, and melting as in tears she lay,
In a soft silver stream dissolved away,
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,
For ever murmurs and for ever weeps,
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,
And bathes the forest where she ranged before.”

"Do you think," said I, "then, that scratching the head has any thing to do with poetry?"

"Yes, sure, and a great deal too; and that's the reason why Mr. Pope's picture is always drawn as if he was scratching his, under his velvet cap."

I laughed outright.

"However," added Mr. Gayford, "that's all as God pleases. One is made for one thing, and one for another; one's for books, t'other for plough: what Mr. Pope had better than me in mind, I have better than him in body; and so it is all providence, and makes us all come round again."

I was quite charmed with this sermon of my friend of the Royal Oak, and told him so.

"Why its nothing," said he, "but common sense after all. For if I was to fret myself because I was not a poet, or a master of the buckhounds, like Lord Hinchinbroke, instead of keeping comfortable at the Royal Oak, I might go and be laughed at all day; that's what I should deserve for my pains, and all I should get for my fretting. God never intended all of us to be lords."

"Or masters of the buckhounds," said I, which seemed to come quite home to mine host's comprehension.

I now began to be more and more pleased with him, and complimented him on his contented disposition.

"Why you see," observed he, "content is neither here nor there particularly, but every where if we pleased—that's my maxim. To be sure it is more here, than here," (laying his hand first upon his stomach, and then upon his head). "If the belly has enough, and I wear a good coat (here he drew a coat of substantial second cloth close round him)—if I have no need of doctor's stuff, pay every man his own, and the tap of the Royal Oak keeps going, why should I envy any man? I say, if the King (God bless him for a gentleman, every inch of him, who made me a yeoman pricker, and loves a good hunt, as well as Squire Neville, of Billingbere)—if he does not sleep better, though he lies softer than I do, why should I complain that I am not a king?"

"Why indeed?" said I; "but pray, what is a yeoman pricker?"

"Why, don't you know that? It is a sign you are not of the forest. Yet if I were to tell you, perhaps you would not understand it."

"Very likely; but what is it?"

"Why, it is one that helps in the hunt, and the forest, and is about his Majesty; and there is a good deal to do in the riding way; but then that is a pleasure, particularly when we have a good horse kept for us. I believe you have not seen the Royal George?"

"What, the ship?"

"Ship! No. What should ships have to do with the forest? It

is my hunter, I mean—him that I hunt with his Majesty, when I attends him at the races. I suppose you have been at the races?"

"Not I."

"What, not at Ascot?"

"No."

"Whew! How little of the world you must know. But you are young. Never saw the King, perhaps?"

"Never."

"Well, then, you have a deal to larn. It's quite beautiful to see him and the queen, and ride a'ter them and the young princes, at the races, or with the hounds; and that's what's being a yeoman pricker, and gives knowledge of the world."

"That's what I am travelling for," observed I, willing to humour him, "and I shall be glad to take a lesson of you."

He touched his jockey cap (for a yeoman pricker disdains a hat), but added at the same time, "I got a deal of envy about in the town, yet I don't give myself no airs; only it is a pleasant thing to belong to the court, you know. God bless Lord Hinchingbroke for it."

"It was he then who made you a yeoman pricker?"

"To be sure it was. A great man is that Lord Hinchingbroke."

"No doubt," said I.

"Rides and understands a horse well, and is not above speaking to a man below him. That's your true great man. Now there is a little fat cloth-merchant of Reading, who, because he has got a box here in the forest, though he knows no more how to ride than a tailor, thinks himself too good to speak to a yeoman pricker when he meets him. That's what I call true vulgar."

"You are right in every thing, I find," replied I. "But pray, how far are we from Binfield?"

"Oh! not above a furlong; and if you will take over that stile there, through Asher's Wood, it will open upon you as you get out of it, all at once; and anybody will shew you the way to Mr. Pope's. My business lies this way, through Squire Neville's park."

So, saying, he turned off, and left me to find out Binfield, which I soon managed.

And open upon me it did; the most lovely village in the kingdom, perhaps in the world; a union of all that was pastoral and all that was elegant. The beautiful fields, full of enchanting verdure, and covered with flocks, made it appear the one; and the number of ornamented cottages, with now and then a considerable mansion among them, gave it the air of the other.

The owners of most of these were persons of rank connected with the court at Windsor, the polish of which seemed to be shed over their pleasant domiciles, in the high keeping of the lawns and gardens that belonged to them. I felt myself immediately in a politer

air; fancied that I was in a sort of Arcadia, and looked for queens and nobles in the disguise of shepherdesses and shepherds.

Possibly this was rather occasioned by a very handsome bevy of well-dressed women, accompanied by several well-appointed men, who, issuing from the park-gate of Billingbere, shewed how dignified a region I had got into, in comparison with that I had left. The party seemed to revel in the rural pleasures that courted them, and trode the greensward or roved among the woods as if they had never been acquainted with any thing but the simplicity of a country life. Yet the natural ease, and imposing air of superiority, which always distinguish the high-born and well-bred, contrasted themselves here very powerfully with the rough exterior and manners which, for the last days, had engaged me, and I could not help secretly exclaiming,

“Stay, gentle swains, for though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle in your eyes.
Of famous Arcady ye are.”

In short, though I was always a lover of nature, and preferred it to the most exquisite attainments of art, yet the elegance of fashion had also an attraction for me, which, for one who had seen so little of it, was almost unaccountable.

But here too, perhaps, was an appeal to my prejudices regarding the old Norman nobility, for a reason which the reader will easily comprehend. The party I saw, from the name of the lord of the park whence they emerged, were, I concluded, most of them Nevilles, and I hailed in them the descendants of the Cantilupes, Hastingses, and Beauchamps, and (I am afraid, with less charity) that Earl of Westmoreland who, in Gualtree Forest, by a most unknighly stratagem, ruined the last noble of the house of Bardolfe.

How different were these in their appearance, dress, and manners, from the men and women of those times—those iron men, and those stiff, starched women, who gave little movement to the genial current of the soul in their intercourse with one another. They were conversing with the easy cheerfulness and polite gaiety of their rank and education, and seemed to enjoy the scene around with unfeigned delight; giving me, in this, the first impression of an opinion which never afterwards left me, that there is not a more happy position for a person of any mind to be placed in, than to meet the polish of the world in the seclusion of retirement.

Are we to lament this change of manners, which the advance of civilization has brought along with it, or regret that the frowns of the feudal, and perhaps roystering Baron of Billingbere, of the days of Elizabeth, have been exchanged for the soft accomplishments and kindly smile of his well-bred descendants?—No.

I watched the party which had so struck me, till they were out of sight, perhaps secretly wishing I could be one of them, and thought, I am afraid, too much and too tenderly of the place and of the person who first made me acquainted with the fascinations of female elegance. "But of this, no more," cried I, and I paced it vigorously. "My object is man, not woman, except as a part of man."

Yet I wished that I had not seen these Nevilles, who, by their polish and ease, put me uncomfortably in mind that they, as well as somebody else, were in a sphere to which I did not, and perhaps never could, belong. I recovered myself, however, after they had for some time disappeared, and found out a secret—the knowledge of which expanded the more I lived in the world—that when one is under temptation, separation from the tempting object is a more certain and effectual cure, than all that the strongest reason can supply. To be sure, the remedy is a little cowardly;—but who does not know that discretion is the better part of valour?

The graceful and attractive appearance of the Nevilles put me too much in mind of another of the same sphere as theirs, and of my own inferiority to both. While present, this continued, and annoyed me; gone a quarter of an hour, and the lovely face of nature, which I was born to enjoy as well as they, restored me. I thought too of my landlord of the Royal Oak, the born philosopher of content, and blushed. The sight of Pope's house completed my recovery.

It was a low-built fabric of dark brown brick, covered in parts with most redundant ivy, which climbed the very chimneys. The windows were partly casements, partly sashed, and, upon the whole, it had a picturesque air.

The interior had nothing very particular to interest one, except a picture, tolerably painted, of what Lord Chesterfield calls "that poor, crazy, deformed body, a mere Pandora's box, containing all the physical ills that ever afflicted humanity." It prompted reflections, however, of serious import to religious philosophy; for if such a mind could be left untouched and unaffected in such a body, how different from body must mind be, and how independent of it!

A little closet, some six feet square, with a sort of bookcase of two shelves, which had been Pope's own, looked through a casement into a garden, which bordered three sides of the house, and which I next visited. It seemed, however, dedicated to Pomona rather than Flora, for by far the greater proportion was absorbed by culinary herbs and fruit trees, a few sun-flowers and peonies being the chief of the ornamental tribe. Nevertheless, there was an air of content about it; and the housekeeper, a most neat and reverend lady, who shewed me the place, seemed to have all due respect for an arbour, and the identical bench and slate table within it, where

she said the great poet, when he was only a little master, composed those beautiful pastorals, of which *she supposed I had heard*.

She then opened a drawer in the table, and displayed a copy of the original edition of them, for which she said her master would not take twenty pounds, as it was signed in his own hand-writing, by his name, Alexander Pope.

I honoured this classical zeal in her master, and asked who he was. She answered, Arthur Loveday, Esq., of Reading, a gentleman stricken in years, who had known Mr. Pope, and himself had made verses too, though not so good, she supposed, as Mr. Pope's, who began so early.

"Why they do say," she observed, "that he were but twelve years old when he wrote them lines."

And she pointed to a tablet which I had not noticed, and which her master, Mr. Loveday, had fixed up over the bench in the alcove where the poet sat when he composed.

They were those charming little stanzas on solitude (charming, with one exception), which had been my favourites, when, at his own age, I first read them, and I have continued to love them ever since; not the less for the knowledge I have since had of things far different.

"Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

"Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

"Blest who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

"Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

"Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie."

Delighted to find these favourite lines in the very spot where they were composed, I read them aloud, and with such unction, that my conductress looked quite pleased, and said how pleased Muster Loveday would be to hear me.

"And yet, to my fancy," added she, "though some be pretty, some be not. I can't say as I should like to die and nobody care for

me; or if they did, to have no tombstone for them to find me out."

I quite agreed with this observation upon a wish and a sentiment which I think a drawback upon the philosophy of these otherwise philosophic lines; and the lady agreed with me in thinking all the rest worthy the golden age. In fact, they gave me a fit of musing on the vanity of the pursuit of riches or the applause of the world. Is not content, thought I, the object of all our exertions? and if this can be obtained without struggle, why should we plunge into it? And I repeated with still greater emphasis—

"Blest who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away."

To this I added the silliness of supposing happiness more enjoyed by the great and fashionable than the lowly-born; and this musing lasted all the way back to the Royal Oak, where I was not sorry to join my *contented* friend, landlord, and yeoman-pricker, in making a deep inroad into a fine round of beef, which contented me thoroughly, in appeasing the want then uppermost about me.

CHAPTER XLIX.

OF THE GOOD COMPANY WITH WHOM I DINED AT THE ROYAL OAK, AND THE NOTABLE CONVERSATION I THERE HEARD.—EVENT OF THE TRIALS OF DR. FIREBRASS AND THE PEDLAR, AND THE FINAL FATE OF THOSE PERSONAGES.

A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true to one another.
SHAKSPEARE.—1 *Henry IV.*

OUR dinner, at which the landlord presided, sitting under a picture of George III., was, on this occasion, not in the kitchen, but a very decent room; in fact, a sort of ordinary.

Now, an ordinary is the very thing for a young gentleman who wishes to see the world. Certainly, with this view, it is better than the eastern magnificence of eating alone; or, the next thing to it, a college hall, where you see the same hundred-times-seen phizzes, and listen, or pretend to listen, to the same hundred-times-told tales.

In a country town like Oakingham, an ordinary is peculiarly advantageous to a curious traveller, because not only other travellers congregate there, but the notables of the place often drop in, and, at a fixed price, sit down to a plentiful and wholesome repast. Our contented landlord charged but eighteen-pence a head for his excellent viands, leaving his guests to settle the quantity, and therefore the expense of their liquor. This naturally attracted many of the townspeople to him, especially those who had no wives to attract them at home, and some who had.

On this day the meeting was unusually full. At its head were Mr. Sincox, the attorney, Mr. Smellome, the apothecary, and Mr. Sadwright, the bailiff of the place (for there was no mayor)—all topping men. These were all of the aristocracy of the town.

In a somewhat lower degree was a Mr. Smooth, a Dissenting schoolmaster of very extreme principles, it was said, in all matters of government and legal rights, though he seldom spoke to the full extent of his opinions, and always in very submissive, oily language; so that the vicar applied to him the text,—“His words were softer than butter, having war in his heart.” He had been a great favourer of the American cause (when at its height), and had been known to have declared, he thought it was a just one; nay, had illuminated his house on the acquittal of admiral Keppel;—all which got him little respect in the loyal town of Oakingham, and accounted for some cold looks even now on the part of his neighbours.

The landlord paid these guests of his all honour due, by assigning them the high places at the table; and having gathered from me that I belonged to Maudlin College, Oxford, after introducing me in form, ranged me among them. Nor did my jacket of many pockets prejudice me in the eyes of the *inferioris ordinis commensales*, who supposed I must be a man of some distinction, or I would not be so careless of forms as to sit down to table in a shooting dress.

The business of our dinner was not interrupted by any general conversation, but each seemed intent upon his immediate concern—the plate before him; compliments to the landlord, on the goodness of his beef, being the chief topic.

At length, however, one of the guests, a traveller who had just come in from Reading, excited the attention of us all, but mine in particular, by the never-ending story of the robbery at Wallingford, and the supposed culprits concerned in it. This was faintly canvassed at its commencement; but as plates were emptied, and hunger satisfied, the tale of the traveller was eagerly listened to, and his relation discussed in a critical examination of its facts, varying according to the varying opinions and capacities of those who sat in judgment upon them.

My own curiosity was interested by the new fact, that Dr. Firebrass had been examined by a full bench of magistrates, and committed, partly for refusing to answer, but also upon the information of a third party, who had been apprehended that morning, and turned what was called king's evidence upon the occasion. The examinations had been taken in short-hand, printed, and spread about the town, and the traveller having got a copy, produced it upon the table after dinner.

From that it appeared that the informing accomplice was no other than that blacksmith who, it may be recollected, had made the false

key with which the accomplished Handcock had righted himself, as he said, by rifling his master's pantry. This new actor in the scene owned to an intimacy of near thirty years between the pedlar and himself, and now came forward to swear away his life in order to save his own. The account he gave was, that in his early youth he had been guilty of peccadillos, such as robbing hen-roosts and orchards, chiefly in company with the said Handcock ; but of these he had thoroughly repented, and had even turned Methodist during a long separation from his friend, till, after his return, he had been again debauched by him into his old habits, and at length listened to his proposal to rob the bank.

The plan was the pedlar's own, who, by virtue of his pack, had got frequent admittance to the premises, and made himself master of all the ways of the house, particularly the shop and its appurtenances. By these means they contrived to enter it, and by the blacksmith's skill in picking locks, which was what made his instrumentality so necessary to his friend, they carried off their booty. Previous, however, to this—the late serious habits of the blacksmith having made him rather too conscientious—the superior-minded Handcock had advised him to attend Firebrass's lectures, which had entirely convinced him of the lawfulness of robbery, provided it was of the rich, by the poor. It also proved to a demonstration, that all laws preventing it, indeed all government whatever, except that of nature, was nothing but a usurpation by the corrupt few over the virtuous many.

He was not, indeed, quite satisfied by the lecture alone, so Handcock drew up a case for him, to be submitted to Firebrass, who gave the opinion upon it we have mentioned in a late chapter. This determined the blacksmith ; but the question still remained as to the guilt of Firebrass in the transaction.

There were, as may be supposed, many opinions at the table, in which the lawyer, of course, took the lead.

“ There can be no doubt,” said Mr. Simcox, “ that he was a *particeps*, and certainly will be, or ought to be, hanged.”

“ With great submission, as becomes me,” said Mr. Smooth, as he finished a glass of ale, and bowing to the attorney, “ the law will not reach him—neither ought it, since it was only an opinion ; and I hope, bad as our laws are, nobody is to be hanged for an opinion.”

“ And how, pray, friend Smooth,” said Mr. Simcox, “ can you know any thing about the law?—you who pass your days in flogging boys into *Propria quæ maribus*, and *as in præsentî*.”

At this there was a laugh at the schoolmaster's expense.

“ Yes ! yes !” continued the pleased attorney, “ you had better stick to *quæ genus*, for you will make no hand of your republican notions here, I can tell you.”

Here there was another laugh.

“I humbly ask pardon,” returned Smooth, “but I suppose an Englishman may have an opinion?”

“Yes,” replied the man of law; “but if the opinion excite a man to commit a felony, I should not like to stand in his shoes.”

“And yet, I humbly beg leave to ask,” rejoined the schoolmaster, “If Dr. Firebrass were to employ you to defend him, would not you argue as I do?”

“That totally alters the case,” replied the attorney; at which a laugh was kindled against himself, which he did not seem to like, especially as Mr. Smooth bowed and was quiet, as if satisfied that he had gained a victory.

The attorney, however, rallied, and said he would put a case, which was always the best way in a law argument.

“Suppose,” said he, “I was to walk into your school, call all the boys about me, and say to ’em, ‘Now, boys, though you be scholars, and this is your master, you have no call to obey him if he flogs too hard, and you don’t like it.’ What would you say to that, my good Smooth?”

“O! that alters the case too,” observed Smooth, in his turn, which produced a greater laugh than that against the attorney, who absolutely crowed, looking complacently round, and observing, “I think I have settled him.”

I have related this conversation, not from any particular interest that belongs to it, but because afterwards, in much higher scenes, I often saw, under very little more decency of manners, exactly the same feelings displayed among persons reckoned first-rate as to abilities, rank, and education, but who did not love one another. So true it is, that it is the exterior only that makes the difference between man and man¹.

The rest of the conversation at the Ordinary having been all in the same strain (and I have given a sufficient specimen of it), I will content myself with stating its result. The traveller from Reading, who brought the account of Firebrass, having sided with Smooth, who was far from succumbing, the battle might have been a drawn one; but the apothecary and bailiff throwing their weight into the scale of Mr. Simcox, that gentleman finally triumphed; and it was

¹ Mr. Clifford here, perhaps, might have successfully transcribed from his master, Fielding:—

“The great are deceived if they imagine they have appropriated ambition and vanity to themselves. These noble qualities flourish as notably in a country church, or church-yard, as in the drawing-room, or the closet. Schemes have indeed been laid in the vestry, which would hardly disgrace the Conclave. Here is a ministry; and here an opposition; here are plots, parties, and factions, equal to those which are to be found in courts.

“Nor are the women here less practised in the highest feminine arts than their fair superiors in quality and fortune. Here are prudes and coquets, dressing and ogling, falsehood, envy, malice, scandal; in short, every thing which is common to the most splendid assembly, or politest circle.”—*Tom Jones*.

agreed by the majority, that the patriotic doctor deserved hanging as much, if not more, than the blacksmith, or even Handcock himself.

The subject was not pleasant to me, and that I may not revert to it again, I may as well here relate the close of the story, for the assizes were held within a fortnight of this time. At these Handcock was tried, and exclusive of the evidence of his accomplice, the notes of the bank found in his pack having been proved not to have been issued on the night of the burglary, he was found guilty, and executed for the felony ; and Mr. Smooth had the mortification of hearing that the philosopher of the law of nature, being tried and convicted of a gross misdemeanour for the opinion he had given, and which it was proved had actually instigated the robbery, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the gaol of Dorchester, where he died of a fever, brought on by virtuous indignation—a martyr to the tyranny of the laws and the ingratitude of his country.

Not the least affecting part of the history relates, however, to the poor girl of the West Country Barge, all my fears for whom, occasioned by her intimacy with the wretched Handcock, were well founded. His flatteries had been too seductive ; she listened to them with a result fatal to her innocence and peace ; and his fate so affected her, that a miscarriage caused her death within a month after his execution.

When Le Sage wrote *Gil Blas*, how little did he contemplate such a consequence from his fascinating work !

CHAPTER L.

MORE TALES OF MY LANDLORD.—I MEET WITH A LADY, WHO REMINDS ME TOO MUCH OF ANOTHER.—CONVERSATION WITH A STRANGER, ON NATURE AND ART.—THE LANDLORD'S ACCOUNT OF HIM.

One touch of nature makes the whole world of kin.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Troilus and Cressida*.

Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.

As You Like It.

The moated grange. At that place call upon me.

Measure for Measure.

I STAID with my Oakingham landlord two days longer, pleased with his temper and his conversation, both which, if not refined, were instructive. He was full of observation, to which he was inclined by nature ; but it had been much sharpened by his lot in life,

from the opportunities it gave him of surveying, in his guests, the different characters of men. His shrewd remarks, and the anecdotes he told me of different travellers who used his house, first gave me the idea that if a man wished to get acquainted with his fellow-men, he could not do it better than in the shape of an innkeeper.

This impression was, in after-life, confirmed to me by the authority of no less than the shrewd and observing Paley, a great philosopher in that way; who did not scruple to say,—in his broad Cumberland dialect, which always added so much emphasis to the sagacity of his remarks,—that if he wished to “stooody the warld, it should be by keeping a pooblic-hoose by the waay saide.”

My friend Gayford had not, perhaps, this motive when he set up the Royal Oak; but becoming its landlord, he could not help indulging his vein, for which it gave such fine play. As he had, I know not why (except that he found I liked to hear him talk), taken a liking to me, we gossipped together frequently at the door of his inn, on a bench which, in fine weather, invited many a passenger to take a pint, and served commodiously for these conferences.

He naturally talked of the gentry who used his house, in whom, he observed, there were vast differences, to be sure, “which I always, however,” said he, “could find out in the twinkle of an eye. For I had not been an innkeeper twelve months, before I found I could always discover real sterling from *Brummagem*: that is to say, the real quality from them as apes them, and that, even though the *Brummagem*s be the richest. By-the-bye, here comes one of them up the street; I know it by the scarlet and gold livery of the outrider, which they have no more right to than I have, for it belongs to the prince. But they are coming to change horses, so I must be stirring.”

At which, ringing loudly the ostler's bell, he prepared himself for the most obsequious bows, which he gave plentifully to two persons in rich travelling dresses in the inside of the carriage, when it stopped.

They were a gentleman and lady; the one a most meek and insignificant-looking being, for a male creature; the other a woman of prodigious energy, who scolded both landlord and ostler with vociferation, for having given them a horse that went lame, the last time *she* changed—for I observed she did not say *we*.

The prudent Gayford bowed an excuse, which seemed a reasonable one, for he said the horse was sound at starting, but picked up a nail on the road, and had been, much to his loss, lame ever since. This, however, did not pacify the lady, nor apparently the gentleman, who, putting his little head under his wife's arm, so as to reach the window, said, as loud as a very tremulous voice would permit, “Indeed, Mr. Gayford, this was very bad usage, and Lady Fitz-John and I take it very ill.”

Gayford had nothing for it but to bow again, and the carriage drove off.

After he had looked after them till they were out of sight, sitting down again, he observed, "Now that's a sample of what I was a-saying. That's true *Brummagem*. It's well that that gentleman was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, for he never would have got his meat else."

"Who are these Fitz-Johns?" asked I.

"Who, indeed?" answered he. "They are no more Fitz-Johns than you. And yet they are, too, for the king has given them leave; but that's all. They don't come from no people of that name."

I asked how that was.

"I'll tell you," said he, "the father of Mr. Fitz-John—or, as we must now call him, Sir John Fitz-John—was Ralph Johnson, gent., for he never called himself esquire, and hadn't need, for he was only a grazier, and drove to Smithfield Market; though he left a large fortune to this chap, who said I used him ill. The son was always a poor creature, and so to take care of him he married that lady, who was the daughter of a pawnbroker, and had a fortune too. The two fortunes together made them exceeding rich, and so as Mrs. Johnson was ashamed of her new name, though her own was Figgins, she had it altered; and by some *hocus pocus* with the heralds, which cost a deal of money, it was changed into Fitz-John; which, I understand, is quite the same name, only in another language. Well, this even did not satisfy her; so, he being in Parliament, they somehow got knighted, and she is now my lady, and thinks herself a woman of fashion; though I say she is nothing but *Brum*; for, as the saying is, I know a sheep's head from a carrot; and can tell real true fashion from counterfeit as soon as I see it. I was not so long in Squire Neville's family for nothing. Those are your true ladies."

I quite agreed to this; observing, that "I believed I had seen some of them the day before, in the way to Mr. Pope's."

"Nothing more likely," said Gayford, "for they often leave the park for the woods, and run about, enjoying nature, like young fawns, as they are. Ah! *they* are the true blood, which Mrs., or Lady Fitz-John, if she had millions, never could be. But they were not all Nevilles as you saw. One of them was taller than the rest; was not she?"

"I think so."

"Aye; she be a rare one, and a genuine, or, as I say, a real lady. She is a viscountess."

"You know her, then?"

"Yes, by seeing her at Billingbere: they call her Lady Hungerford."

I started! for what did not that name recall? The summer-house!

—the bust at Foljambe ! Alas ! I was not cured. The mere thought, thus brought to my recollection, filled me with tremor, and I could not listen to my landlord's further dissertation about fashion, which, like Borachio, he seemed to think "a deformed thief."

One trait, however, I could not help remarking, as moving his wonder and laughter too ; at which I was not surprised, for, in my then ignorance of the London *beau monde*, it much moved mine. It seems that he had gathered in the steward's room at Billingbere, an anecdote of a family of high pretensions to this famed distinction of being fashionable, but of moderate fortune, so that they could not go out of town at Easter, like the rest of the world.

"Would you believe it?" said he, "they closed all the front windows of the house that looked upon the street, and lived a fortnight in the back rooms, never stirring out, that it might be thought they were in the country. Now their country was only the back yard, and their country-house the back rooms ; and I ask you, Sir, if my tapster there, in his blue apron and sleeves (and not ashamed of them), is not more respectable than such fashionables?"

To this, without answering for Dick tapster's virtues except in his capacity of a tapster, I assented. But the interest called up by the mention of Lady Hungerford made my ear dull to the gossip of my sagacious landlord ; and though he would willingly have told me many things he had observed among the great, I could not help feeling a strange longing, without any motive but restlessness, to go again to Binfield. Perhaps I may again see this superior lady, thought I, about whom so many interesting associations are thrown.

I therefore started upon my legs when the arrival of another carriage made my landlord do the same, and in about half an hour had made my way through that beautiful Asher's Wood, now well known to me, and found myself once more at the gate of the park leading to Billingbere.

Here I began to calculate the chances of again seeing its elegant inhabitants, and with them the friend of her whom I found I still loved too well. They came not, and I wound through the beautiful village, wandering I knew not where, till I came in close proximity to one of the most picturesque country churches I had ever seen. It was placed in a retired nook, for which it seemed made, and the nook for it. Its tower, its porch, its ivy, and above all, its seclusion, suited my frame of mind. The air was in that sort of calm, that not a leaf rustled, and the only sound which was heard, was now and then of a rook cawing in an elm above, and a distant waterfall, which, from the dryness of the summer, frequently stopt.

All seemed the palace of Silence, and I sat down on a moss-grown tombstone, which covered the remains, it said, of one who had been once beautiful and gay, but always innocent, a girl of sixteen. It was erected, it added, by "the friend that loved her most in the

world." Who was that friend? A father, perhaps! Perchance a lover! Yes; a lover! and the body of Bertha, dead upon a bier, lay stretched in imagination before my eyes, which moistened much ere I recovered myself.

What fools does imagination sometimes make of us! My walk certainly did not cure me. Except, however, for this little burst, the musing into which the calm and sobriety of the scene threw me was any thing but unhappy: for though serious, the reflections always prompted by the sight of a church, and particularly of a country church, are never sad; they separate one from this world, but they bring one to a better. Here, also, the sight of the old clock, and its large dial, surmounted with a most quaint figure of Time, would have forced me, had I not before been disposed to it, to think of the vanity of human wishes.

In this situation and this mood I continued, in a sort of day-dream, for full half an hour, when I was awakened by the sound of female voices, one of which said, "This will be the best view of it." I looked up, and what were my sensations when I beheld the ladies I had almost expressly come in search of—the Nevilles and their distinguished guest!

Distinguished she was, both in her mien and features; both shewing the most beautiful sample of *la haute noblesse*. But the features I especially studied, in the minute glance I had of her without interruption; for I wished to compare them with those of the exquisite marble representation of them I had seen in Bertha's summer-house, every trait of which I remembered as if but an hour before, for Bertha's sake. She seemed, however, a few years older than the bust, and several than Bertha herself, nevertheless, fitted by her exquisite manner and most speaking countenance to be the preferred and admired friend of Miss Hastings—perhaps, thought I (and it then first occurred to me), *la chère maman*, of the French letter.

A yew tree intervening, gave me the opportunity of making these observations; but the change of position in the ladies brought me to sight, and I was too naturally well-bred to continue where I was, as it seemed an intrusion upon their privacy and occupation; for I found they were all sketching; and the intelligent features of Lady Hungerford were particularly lighted up by her employment.

How attractive is real refinement, as well as real simplicity! All my life long have I been endeavouring to decide which to prefer, but in vain.

Here, at all events, refinement carried it, *because it was present*; but ah! how my memory lingered upon her who always presented so lovely a union of both.

Well, I would have given the world to have told Lady Hungerford that I knew her, that I had seen her before, that I knew her

friend, and that I loved her for that friend's sake. Such was my fancy's wish; but O! the disappointing reality! as I turned my eyes upon my own inferiority, I despaired of ever knowing her, as of ever again seeing her friend. In short, I slunk away, almost like a criminal found in a suspicious place.

Out of sight my buoyancy returned, in a walk which, in all the same quiet beauty, extended itself far beyond Binfield, till I discovered the Thames at a distance, streaming through the landscape like silver. I then turned back, and came round again to the same retired church which had excited so much interest.

In my way my attention was arrested by a gentleman's mansion, which seemed the very emblem of the most perfect tranquillity, and independence of all exterior considerations, which man would desire. It was one of those places which, if a traveller came to, he would stop to look at, and meditate on its happy privacy. Perhaps, having passed, he would turn back to look at it again, and then would give a rein to his fancy; would conjure up a thousand dreams of the pursuits and characters of its inhabitants, or what effect, if he possessed it, it might have upon his own. If houseless, and his fortune to seek, as I had, the interest would be increased by contrast, and how would he not wish to be the possessor of just such a residence!

This was not the first time I had felt thus, and it always made a sort of epoch in the day's journey, sweeter for the occurrence.

As to the house itself, it seemed one of the private houses of Inigo Jones; plain, but commodious, and of handsome proportions; and, what did not take from its interest, it was surrounded by a moat.

When I returned, as I said, to the church-yard, the ladies I left there were gone, but the spot was not deserted. In lieu of the ladies, a single person, of good mien, and well, though plainly dressed—in short, with the air of a gentleman, and intelligent withal—seemed to be examining (and that with pleasure), the attractive simplicity of the sacred fabric. He went round it and round it, stopping at intervals to indulge his gaze upon particular parts. There was great affability, as well as feeling, in his countenance, and being far beyond the meridian of life, which seemed to give him a privilege, and seeing that I was also surveying the whole spot with interest, he addressed me, saying, as he touched his hat,

“You seem pleased, sir, and I always like to see men of your age pleased with such objects as these.”

I observed, in answer, that even without the help of Gray, I always thought a country church and church-yard one of the most pleasing sights we could behold. They touched the heart as well as the eye.

“I honour the sentiment, sir,” replied the stranger, “it is this mixture of heart with the senses which gives to nature, and art too,

their best attractions. The simple beauty of this church, and the perfect quiet of its precincts, are the cause of an almost daily visit which I make to them ; so that I could envy Dr. W—— his parsonage there, who has it hourly before his eyes."

"It is, indeed, close," said I.

"Some people say too close," replied he ; "but I don't agree with them (though they are persons of taste), if only for the reason you gave just now—for the sentiment it inspires. For unless you can apply to such proximity the old adage, 'the nearer the church the farther from God,' I will not quarrel with it. You will observe, too, that as a mere matter of taste, distinct from all notions of piety, it is a very pleasing object : its windows of the truest gothic, and its towers and ivy-clothed battlements,—which our modern Wrens and Joneses make most essential to all their would-if-you-could attempts to turn the nineteenth into the fifteenth or sixteenth century,—are genuine. By-the-bye, have you ever made out, what I never could, why ivy is always given to Bacchus, as well as to a church porch? He is called, you know, 'ivy-crowned;' how can such a venerable plant belong to such a jolly god, loving, as it does, the oldest and even most ruined places, far from all vestige of peopled cheerfulness?"

I thought the remark original, but could not resolve the question.

"Well," continued the stranger, "it is only a pity that by a touch of his pencil, Mr. —— (naming a celebrated architect) cannot inspire the breast with the realities of the notions which he endeavours to present to it through the eye. That belfry, calling the real simple folk to church, and those few thinly scattered tombstones, where 'the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,' speak more to the soul, than the most costly *fictitious representations* of what is *wanted*, but never obtained, by this fashionable rage for the sentimental. All that building and planting can do can never reach the effect upon the imagination, or inspire the associations of real veneration and piety, which the mere view of this simple church, rustic as it is, never fails to generate."

I assented willingly to all this, when the gentleman went on.

"I have been told that not long ago a great master of the art admitted to one of his rich employers, for whom he had built just such a tower as that before us, and which he had been admirably successful in 'ivy mantling,' as he called it, that they could not always command a *moping owl* to complain to the moon. It would be so classical, he said, of an evening, to be sure of being able to quote

'The moping owl does to the moon complain.'

"Mr. Longcloth," continued the stranger, "the gentleman who patronized him, and was a wealthy wool stapler, caught at it, and

the peasantry, tempted by a large reward, robbed all the owls in the neighbourhood, of the young owlets, or their eggs, in order to breed up a sufficiency of these sentimental birds, so immortalized by the poet; but the owlets all died, and though some were hatched from the eggs under hens, they were all killed by their step-mothers, as soon as they discovered what an ugly unnatural brood they had produced."

I laughed heartily at this anecdote, which did not displease the gentleman, who, perhaps upon the strength of it, entered into a longer discourse with me, chiefly upon matters of taste in regard to landscapes, buildings, and the comparative claims upon our admiration of nature and art. In these he gave so decided a preference to the former, that he seemed to undervalue the latter; and though he shewed much skill in his argument, and indeed much mind upon every thing, I told him so.

"You are not the first," said he, "who has made the observation, and some of the quizzers presume to call me Old Primitive, because I think primitive tastes, that is, those which nature first prompts, the most sure of giving pleasure, and that they ought, therefore, to be followed, both in our moral conduct and our works of art."

I asked an explanation, and he went on.

"What I mean is, that I prefer the appearance of convenience and comfort to grandeur and the most splendid decorations of art without them. That is my first item in the catalogue. Next, in all sights and sounds I abide by the same rule. Those that speak to us of social happiness, the affections, the gratification of our wants, come infinitely, in my mind, before those which merely gratify our taste for the gorgeous or refined.

"Do you want an example? look at that smoke that curls among the trees of the wood below. It gives signs of habitation; it tells that there is a man or woman there, and with them, human nature; and, from the proof that there is fire, probably of human comfort. Do you think that a pilgrim in the desert, helpless and solitary—perhaps hungry—would not prefer this to the most beautiful works of art, even those of Palmyra, should he suddenly encounter them, without such an accompaniment?"

"I remember," continued the gentleman, "when this first struck me: it was at the magnificent Fontainebleau, where the smoke of a chimney issuing through the thatch of a cottage in the forest, gave me a pleasanter feeling than all the gilded ceilings and wainscots in

Had Wordsworth then written, the enthusiastic stranger would, no doubt, have aided his subject with these impressive lines, taken from the address on revisiting Tintern Abbey:—

"Wreaths of smoke
Sent up in silence from among the trees;
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods."

the cold saloons of the palace. So also, the sight of a mere candle in a casement to a traveller in the night ; the tolling of a bell from a church, or a workman's yard ; or the sight of a little squire's house, in a sheltered dale, when we fall suddenly upon it amid heaths and downs ; in short, whatever shews man in his comforts and natural habits, is more interesting than what exhibits him in his pride. You read Milton, no doubt, young gentleman—read, and admire him?"

I assented ; a little struck with his rapidity.

"Then you may remember the wish of the benighted brothers, lost in the wood, in *Comus* :—

‘ Might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed, with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames.’ ”

I was much moved with the energy he infused into all this, as well as the justness and good taste of the observation, and was about to remark as much, when he proceeded :—

"Hence I prize obvious utility—that is, obvious adaptation of means to ends—before ornament ; that is, naked ornament without this utility. This is, even in its mere self, one of the sources of the beautiful, and so Burke considers it, in, I allow, an extreme case—the snout of a swine, so plainly designed to root up the ground in quest of food."

Again I was impressed with the strong feeling and eagerness shewn by the stranger, on a subject I had never before considered, and began both to respect, and to wonder who he was who thus condescended to talk to me so willingly, and, as I thought, so well. He was plainly a man of mind, and something of an enthusiast, but not in my eyes the worse for that.

After a few more observations in the same strain, the church clock striking mid-day, he pulled out his watch to set it ; saying, that this was almost a daily occupation of his, which he did not like to forego.

"It not only keeps my house," said he, "right as to time, but gives me a fair pretext, or rather obligation, to visit this favourite spot oftener, perhaps, than laziness would always permit."

"It is a good deal of trouble, however," said I, wishing him to go on, "and many would say scarcely worth while."

"You, I hope," returned he, "are not among them, as you seem to enjoy the contemplation of nature as much as myself. If so, consider—you have an object, we will say, in a neighbouring town, though only, perhaps, to buy a quire of paper, or a strap for your saddle. Should your way lie through pleasant fields, or 'by a forest side or fountain ;' in short, a delightful walk, which you have leisure to take ; would you wish to be placed at once in the midst of the town to obtain your purchase, or would you take the trouble and

pleasure of the walk to get at it?" A Utilitarian would scout this, but I trust you are not a Utilitarian."

"Even if I were," said I, "I should feel bound by that very character to prefer such a walk, for I know nothing of utility except as conducing to happiness; and if the walk makes you happy——"

"Right, quite right," cried he, interrupting me. "I see we think alike."

Then abruptly changing the subject, he said as if inquiringly,

"But you are not of this place? for I think I know every young man in Binfield; and if you are not a Mr. Forrest, who is expected home from abroad, I should say you are a stranger, and one I am glad to see, seemingly so well cultivated."

I bowed, and told him my name was Clifford, or properly, De Clifford; my family of Yorkshire; and myself from Oxford, on a tour of pleasure; though, for the sake of getting better acquainted with things, I was at present on foot, and that, struck with the beauty of the neighbourhood, I had taken up my abode at the Royal oak, at Oakingham.

He seemed pleased at this communication, musing at the same time on the name—repeating it twice—"Clifford—De Clifford, of Yorkshire,"—as if to himself; then, resuming, he said, my plan was a manly one, adding, that he knew my landlord well, who was a philosopher in his way—as a practical one, equal, perhaps, though without knowing it, to many a one at Alma Mater itself.

"But pray, may I ask your college!" said he.

"Maudlin now; lately Queen's."

"Queen's!" cried he. "One of my oldest and most respected friends is principal tutor there, and you must of course know him—Mr. Fothergill."

"He was my tutor, relation, and benefactor," said I; "whatever I am, or whatever I may be, I owe to him."

"I am delighted to see you," said the gentleman, "and hope to see you again."

At this, observing that having completed his day's business with the clock, and being wanted at home, he must leave me *for the present*, but hoped soon to see me again, he pulled off his hat, and wished me good day.

For myself, I was sorry that he did not acquaint me who he was, which I could not, I thought, ask without rudeness. I wished it; for there was something original in him: but on returning to the inn, the all-knowing Gayford satisfied me in a moment.

"He talked to you about natur, and all that—did he?" said Gayford.

"Yes."

"And set his watch by Binfield clock?"

"Yes."

“A portly, good-natured man, free to talk a bit?”

“Yes.”

“Depend upon it, it was Squire Manners, of the Grange. A very proper gentleman, I assure you; one of our best; and hand and glove with my old master, Muster Neville, who consults him about garden-grounds, summer-houses, and such-like. He was formerly a great man for London, where he knew all the Lords, and was in Parliament, but now he hardly ever stirs from this, which indeed is his native land like.”

“Well, then, why should he stir?”

“Why, though born and bred here, and his father before him, when the great house, or castle, I believe they call it in the north, fell to him from his uncle, he were forced to remove, and the town and foreign parts kept him a many years from us, but he said he never were so happy as when he cum’d back.”

“And what is his character and way of life,” asked I, “for he seems not a common sort of person?”

“Common! No! Any thing but that. Why though he be a man of fortin, and cum’d, they say, of a high family, he will sometimes shut himself up for a month together, and see nobody but the church clock; not even Muster Neville. At best he won’t visit nobody but him, though he have plenty of neighbours, and good ones too. Yet he will talk by the hour with a farmer, or one below him, like me, or with a stranger he might meet, like you, particularly if he liked woods, and gardens, and the moon, and such-like. He can talk rarely, however, I can tell you, on a mort of things, and the people that ventures to talk with him, if they oppose him, are generally soon dumb-founded.”

“Original enough,” said I; “has he far to walk to set his watch?”

“About half a mile: and yet he will sometimes be an hour a-doing it, he do take so many windings and turnings after any thing that touches his fancy; not to mention gossippings; just as the maggot bites. But I am not going to say any thing agin him, for Squire Neville have a high opinion of him, and he do a deal of good, and is always the poor man’s friend.”

CHAPTER LI.

WHO THE STRANGER IS.—A VISIT FROM HIM, WITH A PROMISE OF MUCH PLEASURE FROM HIS ACQUAINTANCE.

One touch of nature makes the whole world of kin.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Troilus and Cressida*.

Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?

As You Like It.

THE account given me by the landlord of my new acquaintance pleased me so much, that I wished to see him again, and had planned going up to Binfield the next day,—when, as much to my pleasure as my surprise, I received a visit from him in person. He was ushered into my room by Gayford, and frankly said that as I seemed to do justice to the attractions of the forest, and was a stranger to it, he would, if I pleased, be my guide to some of its most beautiful spots; “though,” added he, “you are here almost in the very centre of them, and your landlord, from being a yeoman-pricker, knows every inch of them as well or better than I.”

Gayford bowed, not ill-pleased at the compliment. I thanked Mr. Manners most heartily for his kindness, which I gladly accepted; and as we drove out of the town in a handsome park chair, he said there was something so much of kin to his own mind in the taste I had shewn for the natural pleasures of sentiment, inspired by such scenes as he had found me in, that he had resolved to seek me out.

“For,” added he, “among the millions of fellow-creatures, as to flesh and blood, that there are in the world, there are so few who have fellowship with us as to mind, that if I meet with one once in ten years, I think it a God-send, and a duty to cultivate it.”

I was flattered enough with such a speech, but could not help observing—“I hope it is not so difficult for kindred minds to find one another out, as to make a case once in ten years a God-send.”

“That is a very comfortable sentiment,” replied he, “for a young man of your years and seeming complexion. When you are of my age you will, perhaps, change your note. Have you really even now found so many minds congenial with your own, as to doubt my position? Have you made and *preserved* so many friendships? have you never been disappointed in your affections, and never dropt, or been dropt by, those you loved, and who seemed to love you?”

The question was a home one, and somewhat alarmed me, for I found I could not successfully reply to it. All that had passed at

Sedbergh, compared with Oxford, and the last scenes at Foljambe Park; shot across me in no pleasing colours, and I gave a sigh, which did not escape my companion.

“Hah!” said he, “I fear I have touched a string which vibrates too strongly, and you may be already of my opinion, though unwilling to own it. If so, I ask pardon.—But I really must tell you,” continued he after a long pause, “that I had another reason for seeking you out, besides the seeming congeniality of our tastes; though that alone, for the reason I have given, would have prompted me to do so. You told me your name was Clifford, or, as you repeated it, *De Clifford*. Mine, as the landlord informed me he had acquainted you, is Manners. What if it should turn out that we are, though distantly, connected; or as, if I were a Scotchman, perhaps I ought to say, nearly *related*?”

I was astounded at this, and began to think it might proceed from some of the eccentricities which Gayford had almost asserted belonged to him. He went on, however.

“You informed me you were a De Clifford, and of Yorkshire; perhaps one of the Cliffords of Bardolfe Castle in that county?”

“Of Bardolfe parish,” said I, “but not the Castle; that was long ago sold.”

“I have heard so,” he replied, “from a tradition in my family, which also recorded the reason of it, and this I suppose you know.”

I bowed assent, saying, I had heard something, though very imperfectly, from my mother, of an alliance with a noble family, in consequence of my great-grandfather’s sister intermarrying with it, and that the castle had been sold, in order to raise her portion; but the name even was so indistinctly known among us, that it had long ceased to be mentioned.

“Well, then,” replied he, “I can inform you that the name was my own; and that your great-grandfather’s sister did us the honour of espousing my grandfather, in the days of Charles II. We are, therefore, you see, close cousins.”

I again bowed, lost in wonder at the strangeness of the discovery, but, upon the whole, far from displeased. In fact, I began to call to mind that my mother had formerly said the name sounded like Manhurst, or Manvers; but this was several years ago, and even she had lost her interest about it, while it was certainly not revived by my father, in whom it had never excited any.

Mr. Manners then further informed me that his ancestress’s portion was 10,000*l.*, a great sum in those days, and asked me many questions about the castle, which I answered with a pleasure in descanting upon it, which also pleased him.

“I see,” said he, “that my first opinion of you will be more and more confirmed, and I shall hail our *rencontre* as it deserves, for giving me such a companion.”

He then proceeded, as we drove through the forest, to point out the thousand beauties of the sylvan scenery which met the eye, particularly the delightful seat of Bill Hill, and over the bridge of the pretty Loddon, whose transformation from a nymph into a river had so pleased the poetic feelings of honest Gayford.

Suddenly turning, we then made a detour by the romantic village of Hurst, and onwards till we came once more into Asher's Wood, though in a very different part of it, presenting a very different scene. For suddenly we found ourselves in the middle of an extensive warren, where, seemingly, ten thousand of its furry inhabitants, denizens of the place, wantoned at large throughout what seemed their own domain, or sat at the doors of their snug habitations, watching the approach of strangers.

Several wild paths traversed the place, so often trod by passengers that our advance did not occasion much alarm. Still the sentinels eyed us, as if to ascertain our intentions; and this and the umbrageous shelter around us, made a pleasing impression upon us both.

What was still more interesting in such a wilderness (for so it appeared), I saw what most completely realized the pretty image in the *Allegro*—

“ From betwixt two aged oaks
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes ;”

and smoke it did, wreath after wreath, notwithstanding it was but little past midsummer. In fact, the warrener (for it was his) and his wife were preparing dinner for themselves and half-a-dozen boys and girls, their happy family.

“ I must introduce you to him,” said Mr. Manners, “ for we are sworn friends, and he thinks me, I believe, a most marvellous proper gentleman—only second to Mr. Neville, yonder.”

“ Yonder ?” asked I, “ is Mr. Neville in sight ?”

And I looked with some interest about me.

“ His house is,” returned Manners, “ if you look down the hill there, over Broad Common; for those chimneys and projecting pieces are Billingbere, a place, for the sake of its inhabitants, worth knowing, I assure you. But here we are at the warren-house which is not only a warrener's mansion, but the very prettiest inn in England. How much do I not owe it ?”

At this, he called aloud, “ What ho ! Will Churchman !”

This was unnecessary, for though we had come over turf, the sound of our wheels had been heard, and the whole family had run out to receive us. The warrener, an old whipper-in of Mr. Neville's father; his wife, who had been own woman to Mr. Neville's mother; his son, who performed the office of assistant warrener, and head ostler when visitors required it; together with one

or two damsels and curly-headed grandchildren—all flocked round Mr. Manners with a heartiness that shewed them right glad to see him.

“I have told this gentleman,” said Mr. Manners, “that your ale, and Mrs. Churchman’s butter and napkin cheeses, are the best in the county. He won’t believe it, so bring him a living proof of it. My usual table there in the shade under the old elm will do very well, and be more agreeable in this hot weather; and meantime, give Sultan a wisp of hay and some water.”

The whole family were in a moment in motion; the dame went to her dairy; the bigger girls to the clothes-press for a clean cloth; the lesser to pick some wall-flowers, “which they knew Mr. Manners liked so;” and brother John led Sultan and the chair into a shady clump. Every one of the family seemed glad to see Mr. Manners, and proud to serve him.

Observing I rather wondered—

“We are old friends,” said he. “How long, Churchman?”

“Off and on, full forty years,” answered the quondam whipper-in; “you were but eighteen when you found us out in one of your rovings from Oxford. Dame and I often talks of it, and that we never seed such a gentleman take so to a woodman or warrener’s life; and Mary, your god-daughter, who is gone for the table-cloth (but she ware born long arter)—why it is now seventeen years since you stood for her in Binfield church. How you used to walk the woods at night, surely! Do you remember Job Sourly, who opened his window and scolded you, for making such a noise with your flute, that it would not let a body sleep?”

Here Mrs. Churchman, who had just placed her cream cheese on the table, and who, from having been own woman to a great lady, was somewhat better bred than a whipper-in, thought fit to chide her husband for being too free.

“It’s all very well,” said she, “when we are among our neighbours or the farmers, but something different is due to gentlefolk. I hope, gentlemen, you like your cheese?”

“Quite as good as ever,” observed Mr. Manners, “and that’s as much as can be said.”

“You were always a gemman,” cried Churchman, “and that’s what I shall say the longest day I have to live.”

“And you were always a good fellow, old Will,” replied Mr. Manners; “good to your wife and children, good to your cattle, and good to your rabbits, even though you do break their necks, a score or two at a time.”

“No harm in that, I hope,” returned Churchman; “that’s all in the way of business. And what would the butchers do, and you gentlemen, who eats their beef, if killing in one’s trade were a

wrong thing? But I always puts the poor creatures to as little pain as possible, and feeds them up well while they are alive. I do hope there be no harm in it, 'squire."

He said this, as if not quite satisfied that the proposition might not be doubtful; upon which Manners, who I saw was amusing himself with him, yet at the same time, as if he was much his friend, consoled him by saying that he need not be uneasy, for that at the creation, God had given Adam power over rabbits as well as sheep and oxen.

This satisfied old Will, who thanked his patron for giving him this comfort; and seeing our repast was done, signed to his son to bring round Sultan and the chair. Mr. Manners, however, desired him to let me see his house and garden before we left him.

"He is of Oxford, as I was," said Mr. Manners, "and who knows but he may love roving, too, and come and take your lodgings, and play the flute in the woods as I did, every year for another ten years?"

The warrener bowed, and his missus, as he called her, curtsied, and said it would make them very proud, and Mrs. Churchman whispered to Mary to run quick and get the patched counterpane off the best bed, against we came to see it.

We then advanced into the house, and never was I better pleased with the simplicity and moderation in which the most perfect comfort may be enjoyed. A sitting-room up stairs, lighted on three sides of it, displayed the beautiful forest in all its glades and natural avenues, and all the glories of its noble timber. The warren presented a busy scene under the windows, and a glade let in the house and park of Billingbere, which still inspired me with strong though secret interest, because Lady Hungerford was still there. The room in the collage, the prospect, the retirement, the wildness, the neatness, all made it a happy place, which no palace could exceed. A bed-room within it was equally attractive for the same reasons, and I did not wonder that Mr. Manners, till he quitted his town life and came to live regularly at the Grange, used it as a delicious villa retreat during the summer months for ten years together.

This he informed me of in his way home—for home he was going without my being aware of it till we were at the very gates; and during the drive he gave me some little insight into his early history. He acquainted me that, when an under-graduate at Christ Church, he had (as indeed he had been all his life, till lately) been much given to roving, as old Churchman called it; and in his various rambles from the house he now lived in, and which then was inhabited by his grandfather, had, by the veriest chance, pursuing one of the tracks through Asher's Wood, stumbled upon this warren-house, belonging to Mr. Neville; that, struck with its seclu-

sion as well as its beauty, being then, as he said, in one of his romantic moods, he immediately set up his tent there, as he thought, for a day and a night, and staid a month, in preference to his grandfather's, in order to be, what he always liked, completely alone; that he got books and musical instruments from Reading, and was so immersed in these pleasures of solitude, greater for the contrast they exhibited to the headlong dissipation, the "rows," and (at that time) drunkenness of Oxford, that it seemed a new and better world to him; that he repeated the visit the next and several summers after—in short, as long as his grandfather lived. It unbent his mind, and enabled it to recover its tone, when a little damaged by the world of London and Paris, not to say Naples, at which places his connections, *unfortunately*, he said, enabled him to make a figure—a scurvy one he feared; for the fever in which he lived with all ranks and conditions of men, and women too, kept him from one self-approving hour; that best and purest, if not only real happiness of man. He said that he often opened himself to Fothergill in these moments of self-blame and disgust, who had, with his good heart and *Coomberland* long-headedness, steered clear of all these quicksands, and advised temporary retirement and self-examination as the best remedy.

"He was right," added Mr. Manners. "It is extraordinary how that keen northern air sharpens the wits, even where there has not been much experience of the world, of which Fothergill must have known less than myself; for he was not older, and had not seen so much of men, though he evidently knew more of their hearts, I cannot tell how. I took his advice, and my father always living in a round of company in summer, whom, from having had too much of them in winter, I wished to avoid, I often came here to enjoy a calm after a storm; and, to be sure, if we wished to lead a life after nature, never was a place so calculated for it. In fact, after being a macaroni for six months in the palaces of London, and dancing with and studying countesses, I became an admirer of the simple beauties of nature in these woods, and employed myself in studying the rustic manners that belonged to their inhabitants."

"And which did you prefer?" asked I, not a little interested in this account, perhaps because I had not been able myself to make up my mind upon the question.

"All that I have been able to settle upon it," answered he, "is, that it never can be settled. To make a rule is impossible. In town, from the frivolity of the people of fashion *while there*, I have often wished for rustic simplicity; while the very same people, when in the country, by falling back into the track of honest nature, but engrafting upon her their own superiority of education and manners, have made me think simplicity a very milk-and-water thing.

I could name names, but I won't; nor would you, perhaps, know them if I did."

"Are the countesses, then, you studied, such frivolous beings in London? As I am a stranger to countesses, I should like to know."

"I cannot say," replied he, "that those I allude to were really frivolous; but they acted as if they were, or something worse. But, perhaps, we may talk farther of this."

It was time indeed to stop, for we had now reached the Grange; and what was my surprise and pleasure too, on the appearance of its moat, to find that it was the very same house which had so much excited my interest the day before, in my walk from Binfield.

Its style I have described, but what it was built of I could not at first discover, for it was covered all over with vines, which, at this time of year, were most luxuriant, promising in a month or two more a delicious vintage, for every cluster looked full south, and many of them, by the care of the owner, were already ripening in bell glasses. A very ample porch, with seats in it, opened into a square hall, with an old-fashioned stair-case of twisted, but massive bannisters, leading to some (not many) comfortable apartments. Those below ranged round the hall, and that we entered, which was called the drawing-room, was hung with tapestry, representing Alexander at the tent of Darius.

Mr. Manners welcomed me with much politeness, a quality which ten years' absence from the scenes where it had been acquired had by no means weakened. He was pleased to say that, for my own sake, he would have been glad to see me; but when he knew that I was the relation, as well as pupil, of his excellent Fothergill, and found out that I was of the same blood with himself, his pleasure had become a duty.

In allusion also to our connection, he led me to a large, well-blazoned pedigree in the hall, and pointed out to me the marriage of "Sir Philip Manners with Griselda De Clifford, daughter of Hugh De Clifford, of Bardolfe Castle, who was lineal from Sir William De Clifford, by Anne, daughter and co-heir of Thomas Lord Bardolfe, killed at Bramham Moor, temp. Henrie IV."

This left no doubt in my mind, if I had had any, that the honour he had assigned me, was no more than correct; and I felt no little pride upon it, on more accounts than one;—for I own I thought of Bertha.

He observed my pleasure in it, and said smilingly, "You will dine with me, my cousin, and I will shew you all my hermitage," (for so he called his place); "and though I won't promise to drive you myself back to Oakingham in the evening, you shall have the chair, and the groom to bring it home."

I suitably acknowledged this civility, and gladly accepted the dinner, but declined the chair.

“For I am sure,” said I, “you of all men, in such a season and such a country, would not deprive me of a moonlight walk.”

“Not for the world,” cried he; “I see more and more you are of the right sort, and a worthy scion of the De Cliffords and Manners.”

CHAPTER LII.

OF THE PLEASANT AND NOTABLE CONVERSATION I HAD WITH MR. MANNERS, ON THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE WORLD AND RETIREMENT.

Lord, who would live turmoiled in the court,
And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?
I seek not to wax great by others' waning.
Or gather wealth, I care not with what envy:
Sufficeth that I have maintains my state,
And sends the poor well pleased from my gate.

SHAKSPEARE.—2 *Henry VI.*

MR. MANNERS now invited me into his garden, “which,” said he, “I am not without pleasure in shewing; although, if you are a Brownite or a Reptonite, you will not like it, for it is what I hold that the garden of a grange—which is not, you know, a palace—ought to be. Indeed, I am not certain if a palace garden stooped a little more to the grange it would be the worse for it. However, a grange we are, and a grange we must be.

‘Parvum parva decent, mihi jam non regia Roma,
Sed vacuum Tiber placet, aut imbelle Tarentum’.

“As to the house,” continued he, “I trust it has comforts; which is all I aim at, for nature wants no more; though in a garden; I acknowledge, she revels, and requires that her rich gifts should be gratefully acknowledged by unremitting care.”

Seeing that I lingered still, in eyeing the house, he added—

“You will find nothing there particularly worth looking at. I admire the arts, and think architecture among the very finest; I have looked by the hour at Michael Angelo’s wonders, and enjoy Inigo Jones’s elegant proportions; but as to the interior of dwellings, Heaven keep me from a house too fine to live in.”

We now sallied into the garden, and I own I was disappointed. I expected a French or Italian taste, or perhaps both, engrafted on

‘Horace, Ep. 1, 7.

For little folks become their little fate:
And at my age, not Rome’s imperial seat,
But soft Tarentum’s more delicious ease,
Or Tiber’s solitude, my taste can please.

FRANCIS’ Horace.

the modern English ;—trellises, balustrades, busts, hot-houses, conservatories. Except the last (of no great dimensions), there were none of these. There was an abundance of natural flowers, and some beautiful exotics ; but these were, I thought, too much mingled with beds of herbs for culinary purposes, of which the flowers formed the borders. This produced a style nearer the preceding, than the then century, in which, indeed, the useful seemed to interfere rather too much with the ornamental, not to weaken the appearance of the latter. There was even an approximation to the *ferme ornée*, which I knew many critics would censure.

There was a piece of water, which had all the appearance of a pond (for it was too small for a lake), and was only divided from the garden by an open fence, letting in the view of whatever cattle might choose to drink, or cool themselves in it. This appeared to derogate from the trim garden seclusion which is so recommended by the learned in those matters ; and I own I myself thought it a fault.

This, however, I did not venture to remark to him ; indeed, as he was a man who had a reason for every thing, whether for or against general customs, I expected, as it turned out, that he would himself explain the apparent solecism.

Observing what I thought of it, he began his defence with animation, as if I had already touched upon a hobby of his which he would not have censured.

“ Why there it is,” said he ; “ I see what is in your mind ; and that you are one of the *petits maîtres* of landscape gardening, who call yourselves men of taste, and think you monopolize it. You have nature and simplicity always in your mouths, yet are always departing from them. What sight in nature can be more gratifying than to see that meek, patient, and bountiful animal (pointing to a cow) revelling in the feast which nature has provided for her in the flowery mead she crops, or the clear water she drinks ? Exclusive of the pleasure which to see this alone creates in a benevolent mind, for the animal’s sake, what ideas of luscious plenty does it not call up for our own ! How pleasant, not to say beautiful (from the associations of the foaming pails of the dairy, which it creates), is the sight of these useful creatures, cooling themselves in the water, or drinking it without fear of harm, and all to contribute to our comfort and our plenty. These are what I call the simple, because the natural, and therefore the primitive pleasures of man. They were those which man enjoyed before he was made an artificial character, or built palaces and hanging gardens ; for Eden was before Babylon.”

I was struck with his energy about this, and perhaps to hear what he had more to say (for I began to agree with him), I said, all that was abstractedly true of a farm, but there were persons who might think the sight not so compatible with garden elegance.

“ Why, taking you at your word,” said he, “ what can even be

more elegant? For you see my cows are handsome in shape, and have polished skins, denoting by their sleekness health, and therefore happiness to themselves, of which the possessor of them must necessarily partake. Hence one of the necessary parts of taste itself (which is to produce pleasurable sensations) is completely exemplified ; and the more so because it is moral and mental pleasure, as all notions of happy feelings or prospects are. In this, therefore, this simple sight exceeds that of the most costly specimens of art, diamonds, or what is beyond them, sculpture or painting. But it is even sensual—if that is what you fine people require ; for what can equal the perfume of the atmosphere occasioned by the mere breathing of these delightful animals?”

At this he snuffed up the air, as if to prove his assertion beyond contradiction, and I confess he compelled me to follow his example, not merely from imitation, for it equalled the purest essence of flowers. For the sake of argument, however, I pointed at the unsightly track made by his favourites in passing to and from the pond.

“Aye,” said he, “I allow that is a defect, and a drawback if you will ; and if you saw it from the *parterre*, or the windows of the house, or in any of the immediate walks around, it might be an eyesore to you professors of taste. But you see, that in those parts it is completely planted out from the eye, and you must come expressly to this spot to behold the unsightliness. Could the sightly parts of a farm be viewed alone, I would have them in the midst of the garden ; they and the flowers would mutually set off one another. Even as it is, the flowers of the field, and the pleasure given by the sight of the animals, counterbalance the disadvantages.”

Here I thought him wrong, his strong partiality to natural tastes not sufficiently distinguishing their differences ; so I observed that it seemed to me he was blending the garden and farm-yard too much together.

“I agree with you,” said he, “that the exhibition belongs rather to farming than gardening ; but what law prevents a union of both, if you can keep the disagreeables out of sight, and only preserve the agreeables?—and then, what more pleasing than these condemned objects? As to their proximity to the house, I prefer the pleasure arising from the sense of convenience and household advantages which it gives (for that in itself is a strong natural pleasure), to the total want of this interest, occasioned by the fastidiousness of banishing them so far off, that out of sight, they are out of mind. It is astonishing what havoc this fastidiousness makes in our stock of happiness, when, under a false notion of elegance, it persuades us to part with the notion, that as men, we are to feel wants, and that to supply them is our natural employment. No ; I would rather have ‘the smell of tedded grass, or kine,’ and that little Alderney close even to my drawing-room windows, were Queen Charlotte

herself and her daughters there, than all the finery of lawns and orange trees, without a single reminiscence of our real condition. How much," added he, "do kings and queens, and overgrown nobles, and minions of wealth, lose, in being deprived of this sentiment, by having all things done for them ! Who would not be miserable with Fortunatus' wishing cap !"

I felt the force of this reasoning, and also of the consequence he drew from it, that all good taste requiring natural feeling for its foundation, and the homely feelings being most natural of all, they were eminent ingredients in forming good taste.

"By the homely feelings," said he, "I mean all that relates to the comfort and convenience of a home; and so far I carry it, that the most common domestic sights and sounds, denoting the habitation and occupations of man, give me (as a matter of taste, mind you) more uniform and unfailing pleasure than many of the finest works of art."

I asked what sights and sounds he meant.

"Even a flock of pigeons on the house-top, if you will," he answered; "the smoke of chimneys, the bark of the watch-dog, or the crow of a cock. I have even felt my taste gratified on returning from a twilight walk, in hearing the sound of cattle in a field, though perhaps I could not see them, biting the fresh grass or chewing the cud. I am not sure that I am not more pleased with this (though certainly not so struck with wonder) than with the columns of Staffa, the magnificence of Schaffhausen, or the falls of Lodore."

The animation with which he uttered this let me more into the essence of his character (that is, his enthusiasm) than any thing that had yet occurred; and though I did not quite agree with him, I both wished and expected more. Nor did he disappoint me, for the stream of his mind was perpetual, especially on the subject we were upon, for he said, whoever had pleasure in a garden, need never stir out of it.

"I would not indeed," said he, "exchange the elegance, beauty, and perfume, and above all, the *soothing* of this spot, for all the gratifications which ambition can give. For when did ambition cause any thing like the delight of the mere opening buds of the spring, the blush and the sweetness of the rose, or what has been appropriately called 'the noble plainness of the lily?' I say 'soothing,' because it is the most appropriate term I can apply to it, when in a particular frame of mind. For if any thing ruffles me (which, thank God! in this retirement is but seldom), if I have any unpleasant feeling to get the better of, or even any bad public news, half a dozen turns in this daisy-studded walk, particularly if fresh with showers, recovers me directly."

"That," said I, "I can fully comprehend, and the soothing you

have mentioned makes me feel the propriety of, perhaps, an extraordinary comparison which Bacon makes of the perfume of a garden, to strains of music floating in the air, 'coming and going.'"

"I thank you for recollecting it," said Mr. Manners; "for, though extraordinary, it is a pretty comparison, and it were amusing to follow it up. It, however, can be only to the softer and more pathetic airs of music that flowers can be likened, and even they must be of the gentler and more delicate kind; those violets and lilies of the valley, for example, those anemonies, heart's ease, polyanthus, and we may admit a few young rosebuds. These may remind us of the softer and more pathetic, as well as elegant strains in the graceful minuets of Handel and Gluck. But very full-blown roses, narcissus, pinks, and gaudy tulips, do not come under the head of *soothing*, any more than chorusses, overtures, or grand sinfonias."

I thought this both playful and just, and he seemed to like it himself, when, as if recollecting himself, he said:

"If I mistake not, I left here yesterday a book (we were close to an alcove), where all I feel on this subject is developed in far better language than mine."

At this, having found the book, he read: "Gardens have charms, that to me exceed all the pleasures of life. It was a garden that was the earthly paradise of our first parents in a state of innocence: it was in a garden that Epicurus taught his philosophy, who was said to have understood true pleasure the best of any man. But suffice it to say, that when you grow into years—*when you begin to exercise the mind* more than the body, as men before they grow old always do—then you will find the help of it to contemplation; then the walks, the trees, the plants, the birds, the open air, all fellow-creatures of yours, made together with you, for his pleasure—who is, the Author of all things—will please you indeed; when especially the innocence, calmness, and serenity of your thoughts, make you fit for so divine and ravishing an exercise."

Here he closed the book, and I expressed to him my pure and sincere pleasure in hearing such eloquent and feeling passages, and asked who was the author?

"It will surprise you more," said he, "when I tell you that he was no recluse, afraid of the world, or to mix in its storms, but an eminent statesman, and one of the very few whose character was not only stainless, but illustrious, among those who brought about the Revolution—it was King William's Lord Privy Seal, the Viscount Lonsdale. Honour him, too, the more, that he was educated at Sedbergh, like you, and like you removed to Queen's."

This put me into raptures with all he said so well upon the garden subject.

"And yet," observed Mr. Manners, resuming it, "as to gar-

dens, I have a crotchet which you will perhaps be shocked with. Much as I love, admire, and delight in flowers, if I had but one, I should prefer the kitchen garden."

"What, lose the elegance of flowers?"

"Yes, rather than the benefit of herbs. For again I say, *man thinks of what is necessary before what is ornamental*; he was a cook before he was a gentleman; and I regard *scentless* flowers, at least, with all their painted charms, and even those that emit the sweetest perfumes, when I think how ephemeral they are, as I have regarded many of their pretty and perfumed sisters in the world, as beautiful and as ephemeral as they. How many of these look fair, and bloom for a time, but are only attractive to the eye, and for the moment, and are wholly without power to charm the mind or fix the heart. Such are by far too many of those beautiful tulips of flesh and blood, (all show, but no fragrance), who throng our drawing-rooms, radiant in colours, brim-full of accomplishments (made so by what is called female education), but totally devoid of powers of companionship, or capacity to perform the higher duties of the sex.

"Surely," said I, "this is not the character of woman?"

"Certainly not of all women," replied he, "but as certainly of the greater part of those who revel in the reckless whirl of a London season. These know not one sober thought or generous emotion, at least *during that time*; all is a thankless waste of spirits and mind on glittering nothings, and they return to the country so shattered, both in body and soul, that even there, before they can recover, a second madness bursts out by the renewal of the season, and a second access of the distemper plunges them deeper and deeper, till their case is incurable¹."

"I could hardly suppose this," said I, "for I never was in London, and I cannot divine the cause of what seems so preposterous."

"It is the effect," rejoined he, "of what appears innocent at first, under the milder term of *dissipation*; which, however, grows upon and corrupts the heart, till its good feelings are extinguished; and though what is called crime may not be committed, every thing like virtue is stifled; the poor abandoned, fortune wasted, and all but self forgotten."

Here, looking at a book on the table of the alcove, "O! how true," said he, "is Crabbe's description of the modern Lady of the Manor, who never knew and never cared for distress, so long as it came not nigh her:—

'In town she dwelt, forsaken stood the hall,
Worms ate the floors, the tap'stry fled the wall.

¹ In order that I may not suffer in the opinion of my fair readers, I beg to point out that this was Mr. Manners' sentiment, not mine, and that Mr. Manners was an enthusiast.

No fire the kitchen's cheerless grate display'd.
 No cheerful light the long-closed sash convey'd.
 The crawling worm, that turns a summer fly,
 Here spun his shroud, and laid him up to die.
 To empty rooms the curious came no more,
 From empty cellars turn'd the angry boor,
 And surly beggars curs'd the ever-bolted door. }
 To one small room the steward found his way,
 Where tenants followed to complain and pay;
 Yet no complaint before the lady came,
 The feeling servant spared the feeble dame :
 Her oaks, her acres, why with care explore?
 Why learn the wants, the sufferings of the poor?"

"This," said I, "is a sad account of those without whom the poets tell us we should ourselves be brutes. Surely it is overcharged, or applicable only to a few."

"More perhaps than you are aware of; though I allow many of them, made for better things, would be shocked to think they deserved this character, and when set before them (which it seldom is), would make strong efforts to deliver themselves from their thralldom, brilliant as it is."

"As I must bow to your experience," observed I, "I have upon this nothing to say; but whatever may be said of the flowers of a drawing-room, I never will believe that these roses of nature, while they smell so sweet, are useless. Indeed, as has been well said, no one can be unhappy in the atmosphere of flowers."

"Pray observe," answered Mr. Manners, "that in what I said to their disparagement, I only spoke of scentless flowers; and, even in regard to them, of their ephemeral character. For, spite of these defects, all flowers, I gladly own, because always glad to praise and thank Him who made so much for our happiness, were expressly designed to contribute to it. For though their honey may be extracted by other creatures, their beauty and perfume can have been made only for man. Man alone can, by sentiment, draw out and appreciate this part of their value, and feel it enhanced by the gratitude it inspires. It is therefore I can never walk the garden without feeling a sense of thankfulness amounting to genuine religion."

I honoured him more and more for these sentiments, but could not help observing,

"You do not, then, think a bed of even scentless flowers so useless; still less those that perfume the air, though ephemeral?"

"Far from it," he replied, "while they look so lovely and smell so sweet. But how long do they do so? Sweet to-day; the reverse to-morrow, without a sign left of their utility. Whereas, all those tribes of roots and vegetables, wholesome esculents, and sanative herbs, are full of lasting benefit to our lives and constitutions. To lose them would bring real misery upon all, but especially the poor;

to cultivate, tend, and enjoy them, therefore, is a lasting pleasure, as a lasting duty. A bed of painted wonders is, to be sure, more gaudy and flaunting, or, if you will, more gorgeous and proud, than the humble *olitory* (to use Evelyn's expression). They seem to affect royalty in the comparison; but I agree with the quaint but vivid Hervey—"A kitchen garden looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may resemble the pomp of courts or the ensigns of royalty is banished from this humble community."

I now perceived the reason for what I, at first, did not quite like—the close mixture of flowers and herbs which Mr. Manners had thus explained. As to the keeping of the borders, or the walks, nothing could be more perfect, and I expressed my admiration of it.

"You must have had genuine pleasure, and much regard for the art," said I, "to produce this exhibition of beauty and neatness combined."

"You are right," said he; "for when I bade adieu to turbulence and dissipation to come down here, 'stedfastly purposing to lead a new life,' my garden renewed the innocent and kindly feelings of my childhood, for in childhood I was never so happy as when occupied with one. But these feelings had been sadly damaged and forgotten in the contests of the world. Here, however, in shade and coolness, and equally in sunshine (as the weather or disposition of the moment prompted), I felt the force of what has been so well said, that the most pleasing part of solitude is to be exempt from the passions. I lost sight of political struggles, generating envy and, for the moment, hatred; or the quarrels of authors, generating malice, bad language, and mutual contempt."

"Have you, then," said I, rather surprised, "been an author as well as a politician? I heard, indeed, that you had been in Parliament."

"I scarce know how to answer," replied he. "As to regular authorship, no. But I lived often with authors, and, what was worse, critics, and dabbled a little among both."

"And what did you chiefly observe?"

"That both were of the *genus irritabile*; the critics, perhaps, the worst of the two. Horace would certainly have mentioned them with becoming sharpness, had there been reviewers and a periodical press in his time at Rome."

I felt more and more interest about my host at this intimation, and longed to hear his opinions upon this important class of persons, one or two of whom I had heard Fothergill denounce in his trenchant way. One of them, he said, though so able as to be above vanity, was more vain than the author he criticised; another, though so shallow as to be contemptible, as impossible to humble or contend with as a polecat or a chimney-sweeper, and for the same reason.

I mentioned this to my observing host, and he said it was quite

in Fothergill's style, and pretty much his own opinion. This, however, he begged to defer giving in a place dedicated, by its pure and innocent character, to far other subjects than envy, hatred, and malice. In this I agreed, and, only changing a little the article of time, I thought I saw in my new friend the picture of the Count in the *Belise* of Marmontel. "Une espèce de philosophe dans la vigueur de son âge, qui, après avoir joui de tout pendant six mois de l'année à la ville, venoit jouir six mois de lui-même, dans une solitude voluptueuse."

CHAPTER LIII.

MORE OF HOMELY PURSUITS —MR. MANNERS' OPINIONS OF SOME FAVOURITE AUTHORS, NOT QUITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE IN GENERAL ENTERTAINED.—THE EFFECTS OF EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

Hath not old custom made this life more sweet,
Than that of painted pomp?

SHAKESPEARE.—*As You Like It*.

HAVING surveyed the garden, we now prepared to return to the house; but first, opening a gate, Mr. Manners led me into an inclosure of about a quarter of an acre, covered with buck-wheat, and the crop covered with bees. These swarmed, and seemed to drink perfume in the foliage of two or three odoriferous limes, round which they winged a perpetual flight, with an unceasing, yet soothing hum, which, with the heat of the day, would in a few minutes have invited us to sleep. All round there was a border of sweet herbs, and on one side, facing the south, were ranged, in an alcove, perhaps a dozen hives.

Mr. Manners, seeing my pleased look at this little honied spot, said, "I hope you like my apiary?" and pointing to a small clear stream which intersected it, added, "you see I have copied my master, Virgil, pretty closely, in this refreshing rivulet, and these protecting limes." At this he recited, with emphasis, those pleasing lines:—

"At liquidi fontes, et stagna virentia musco
Adsint, et tenuis fugiens per gramina rivus;
Palmaque vestibulum, aut ingens oleaster inumbrat,
Ut cum prima novi ducent examina reges
Vere suo, ludetque favis emissa juvenus;
Vicina invitet decedere ripa calori,
Obviaque hospitibus teneat frondentibus arbor."

¹ "But near a living stream their mansion place,
Edged round with moss and tufts of matted grass,
And plant (the wind's impetuous rage to stop)
Wild olive trees, or palms, before the busy shop:

“This,” said he, “is another of those domestic sights and sounds, and not the meanest or least pleasurable, I assure you, of those we have been discussing.”

“There are those, however,” said I, “who might think this beneath one who has lived with statesmen and warriors, and men of learning and genius.”

“I hope,” returned he, “you are not one of them. There is a philosophy which analyzes every thing. It dissects the occupations of the world, and those of retirement, and the same occupations have a very different aspect according to the scene. In the world I might feel out of place in watching my bees, when I ought to be in business. But, you see I am in retirement, where lesser interests become of consequence. The pursuit of us all is happiness, and he can never be said to be independent in his, who cannot concentrate his wishes and enjoyments to the spot he inhabits, whether in town or country.”

“Nothing more clear,” answered I, “to common sense; but what would your countesses say to this?”

“*They have not common sense,*” replied he, “though they have talents, and a great many accomplishments. We will, therefore, refuse them as judges. But if they knew any thing about it, probably they would envy me, for I mistake if they have any such enjoyment in the whole range of their splendid, but artificial lives. They know nothing of honey except to eat it; yet their finely-bound books on natural history, into which they never look, might teach them that there were pleasures belonging to it—pleasures which, without searching Buffon, or Goldsmith, or the *Spectacle de la Nature*, the meanest cottager can enjoy and understand.”

“When I consider your rank and condition of life,” said I, “this is at least new to me.”

“Why, no doubt,” he replied, “you will wonder when I tell you that to watch these creatures is one of my daily and rather favourite amusements. I, who have figured (that is, made an exhibition of myself) in drawing-rooms (nay, *the* drawing-room), reduced, you will say, to content myself with figuring in a bee garden. But, independent of the reasons I have alluded to, drawn from the study of nature, this was one of the pleasantest amusements of my youth, and thus it belongs to early recollections; which is quite enough to explain its agreeableness. Add to this, that honey is of great use as a medicine, and an exquisite compound *in arte coquinaria*; for which, if only because it falls within my

Then, when the youthful prince, with loud alarm,
Calls out the vent'rous colony to swarm,
The banks of brooks may make a cool retreat
For the raw soldiers from the scalding heat.”

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

creed that it is one of the *natural* pleasures, I am not ashamed of confessing my reverence. I will, therefore, when we return to the house, show you the best receipt for fattening fowls, as Sir Roger de Coverley showed his grandmother's receipt, in her own hand, for a milk-pot, though she had been a maid of honour. What is better still, you shall at dinner have a convincing proof of its efficacy, in the fowl that will be served up to you."

"I rejoice to find by this," said I, "that the study of cookery, which it seems, with you, is one of the studies of nature, is not incompatible with high rank, and still higher education."

"*It is*, as you say," replied he, "a study of nature, and this would be proved if only by the pleasure children take in it themselves, or watching its process by others, who are removed by situation from following it up as a profession. I had once an aunt Dinah, a kind and grave old lady, of the very old school. When dressed in an evening, she wore a large hoop, and long and expensive laced ruffles; but the strongest reason I have for remembering her is, that on a morning, with tucked-up sleeves, she handled the rolling-pin so well in making cakes for tea. I think I see her now in the housekeeper's room, weighing out the flour. Yet she had two waiting-maids and a footman at her command. Will you say she was not as happy in this as a finer lady, who perhaps would do the same if she dared?"

I found from this, and other observations, that I should every minute gain more and more from this new acquaintance which I had so fortuitously and luckily made, and listened to him with pleasure as in our walk back to the house he gave me further instances of his observing mind.

"In regard to happiness," said he, "who can give rules as to the circumstances which confer it, whether in cultivating bees in a grange like this, or dancing with a maid of honour at a court ball? I have experienced both. I have tried happiness in a palace; I have tried it in a cottage; I have found it in both; I have found it in neither. The reason? because the true place for it is the mind; and it depends not upon either palace or cottage—the *cour royale*, or the *basse cour*—to find it. Whoever is greatly interested by what is within, or not greatly out of his reach, is happy."

"This, perhaps, is the reason," I ventured to observe (though I fear with some consciousness), "why we hear so much of love in a cottage."

"Undoubtedly," said he; "and I have sometimes seen with pleasure the happiness enjoyed there. But, then, it was because of the love, not of the cottage—love so absorbing, that it made place a matter of indifference. This, indeed, may be added, that a cottage is generally associated with spring or summer, and the country. A small lodging in a close street in London would, I allow, make love

a very different affair, and require something of the palace to point its charms."

More and more admiring the variety of topics on which the mind of my enlightened companion had employed itself, and hoping for still farther investigations, I was glad, on returning to the house, to be introduced into a library, full of all varieties of literature in different languages, but chiefly those of *belles lettres* and moral and natural philosophy.

Mr. Manners saw, with some pleasure, that which my countenance exhibited at the sight thus presented. "*Il y a de quoi s'amuser*," said he (for, from having been much in France, he frequently adopted French phrases), "and if ever man can do without his fellowmen, and look down on the world, it is in such a room and in such a seat as this."

Here he threw himself into an easy chair close to a window, which let in a quiet and soothing, but variegated prospect of fields and woods, with the tower of Binfield church in the distance.

"Has a man," said he, "who thinks he has seen enough and to spare of the world, any thing to wish for beyond this?"

"Or, as you might have added," observed I, "who has not seen the world at all."

"No; young gentleman, that won't do. It is not, and ought not to be your creed. Fothergill would tell you there is a great deal more for a tyro to do, before he has a right to what I am now enjoying."

Here he stretched himself out in a kind of voluptuous listlessness: then went on—

"No; you may read, nay, you must, to fit yourself for the part you are to take in life; but not till you have finished your course in the actual scenes of it have you the right to sit still and look back upon it in books."

Wishing him to go on, I ventured to dissent from this.

"You are wrong," said he, "and I am sure that is not what friend Fothergill has taught you. Yet it is a pardonable mistake, and what I myself fell into at your age, in the days of my romance, when, as I told you at the Warren House, I used to lie under the trees, and watch the rabbits, and read *La Fontaine*."

"*La Fontaine*?"

"Yes! I will give you a passage of him, which I got by heart, I read it so often. You understand French?"

"Tolerably," I answered, but coloured sadly, for I thought of Bertha and Gresset.

"I beg your pardon," said he, "for the question; for when I was at Oxford, ninety-nine out of a hundred, though full fraught with Homer, scarcely knew there was such a language. Well, then, my master in philosophy was *La Fontaine* at nineteen, though I

afterwards discarded him. Hear, therefore, what he says of that retirement which I now know how to value, being greatly above half-way gone in my life, but which, like a booby, I thought in my raptures applied to all ages :

‘ Heureux qui vit chez soi ;
De régler ses désirs faisant tout son emploi !
Il ne sait que par ouï-dire,
Ce que c’est que la cour, la mer, et ton empire,
Fortune, qui nous fait passer devant les yeux,
Des dignités, des biens que, jusqu’au bout du monde,
On suit, sans que l’effet aux promesses réponde.
Désormais *je ne bouge*, et ferai cent fois mieux.’

“This last line I was for ever repeating, till bad weather drove me out of the woods, and London, and the life I was born to, and bound to pursue, taught me that premature repose was neither the lot, nor the right, nor the duty of man.”

“That is so like Fothergill,” said I (for I found myself getting as familiar with him as he was with me), “that I should have thought him speaking.”

“You could not pay me a greater compliment,” returned he, “and I hope, therefore, you will defer to my opinion, and not believe what that wise man there (pointing to a bust of Bacon) properly denies, that books will teach the use of books. Their use is to prepare you before-hand for acting in the world when you are in it. After you have done with it, you may profit by your experience, and talk with them about it, as if they were old friends and companions.”

“At any time good friends and good companions,” observed I.

“They are, indeed, excellent company, and what an old poet has called them—

‘ Th’ assembled souls of all that men held wise ’.”

“But the pleasures and benefits of a library have been described at large by the same noble and enlightened person whom I quoted to you on the pleasures of a garden. He observes (Mr. Manners had brought the book in with him from the alcove), ‘What a pleasure to see around me whatever the world has produced most worth knowing. When I have at hand all that philosophers, divines, historians, poets, mathematicians, architects understood, digested into the best method and order, communicative of whatever I am most desirous to know, without any constraint upon me, ready to be laid by without offence when weary of them, and to be resumed without ceremony, what would a man give for so easy a friend? And here (he goes on to say) you have collected together the most excellent of all mortals in all ages, of all countries, without being

troubled with either their impertinence, insolence, affectation, moroseness, or pride,—the common failings of knowing, great, and learned men. But as the use of well-chosen books is the most excellent benefit of any thing that it hath pleased God to bestow upon the children of men, so an ill choice of them is, in the opposite extreme, the most pernicious mischief that can be. Good books instruct us in our duty towards God, towards man, and to ourselves : they form the mind to just and proper thoughts, make us good servants to God, good subjects, and useful to the state, both as governors and servants, and whatever else relates to the common advantages of life : *ill ones deprave the mind, and have in all those respects quite a contrary effect.*”

“Beautiful, as well as wise,” cried I, when Mr. Manners had finished. “It could not be for nothing that this northern Thane, and honour to Sedbergh and Queen’s, was made Lord Privy Seal. What you have read of him gives me the idea of perhaps the most attractive character in human nature ; a really great man, who has successfully served his country in public life, acting up to the dignity of his nature with equal success in retirement.”

“Such an object,” observed Mr. Manners, “must, in favour with the gods, be second only to a great man struggling with the storms of fate—who is said, you know, to be their first. Here there were no storms, but a great deal of wisdom, as well as of goodness, to say nothing of his knowledge of books, which, in a courtier and country gentleman, is no mean praise.”

“I observe,” said I, “that while he gives all due credit to those which form the mind ‘to just and proper thoughts,’ he is equally severe on those which *deprave* the mind, as having a ‘quite contrary effect.’”

“Too true,” returned Manners ; “how many are there of that sort, and what dangers do not you young people run ? I myself know it too well, for I suffered for it ; particularly from those of whom I was most fond—the novelists. The worst is, these seducers, both English and French (Fielding, Smollett, Rousseau), approach us so entirely in the garb of friends, are so set off with wit, humour, agreeableness, and the semblance of virtue, though deeply mingled with vice, that we are taken before we are aware, and incur the woe denounced by the prophet on those who call evil good, and good evil. Like the transformed monsters in *Comus*,

‘So perfect is our misery,
We boast ourselves more lovely than before.’”

“I am afraid that also is too true,” said I.

“It is,” he proceeded. “For what boy—what youth—would not wish to be Tom Jones—or Peregrine—or Roderick ? though as to these last, the one, with all his pride and spirit, proved himself

an infamous rascal ; the other, not a little of a blackguard. Yet both of them are rewarded with as perfect happiness and success as if they were men of the purest delicacy and honour."

I was rather startled at these hard remarks on characters which had often engaged all my interest, and so I told Mr. Manners.

"Why, is it not correct?" asked he. "Is not even Tom, the favourite of every generous, warm-hearted creature like himself, and of every girl, too, who is allowed to read him, sullied and stained with a meanness which would make a gentleman feel dishonoured for life? and though capable of the most ardent love and admiration for delicacy, dignity, and virtue, as well as beauty, in Sophia, is he not guilty of the grossest offences against them all—revelling in mere sensuality while seemingly most impressed with real love? In short, is he not like the description of vice in Shakespeare, which,

' Though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage?'"

I had not a word to say against this eloquent tirade, except that, if the object was to paint human nature as it is, its failings ought not to be concealed any more than its virtues.

To this he answered with quickness: "But why propose the object at all, if it disgust? still more, if not correct in the representation? I never could feel other than disgusted at the picture of a dunghill, or the garbage of a butcher's shop, though ever so well painted; and I blame the painter for proposing it to himself, who must be as nasty in his taste, with all his art, as Swift, with all his wit. But passing this, I deny that the gross and mean conduct of Jones to Lady Bellaston is a truthful representation. It is wholly incompatible with all the rest of his character for frankness, sincerity, generosity, and independence; so that the author is here absolutely mistaken, and the illustrious Homer nods. But this, as only affecting the author himself, may be forgiven. What is far less pardonable, is the general effect of the book on the reader, which is to render our usual corrupt habits (by which, I mean, our sensual indulgences) absolutely of no consequence to our moral happiness.

"As to the effect upon females, too, what are we to say? Jones, soiled as he is with dirty, low amours, is properly reproached with them by his mistress. As a delicate palliation, he tells her, that the delicacy of her sex cannot conceive the *grossness* of ours; and Sophia, pure as snow, and with fancied firmness, declares that she will never marry a man who is not as incapable as herself of making such a distinction. She therefore requires time—perhaps twelve months—to be convinced of his reformation. What is the result? Before the conversation is over, she consents to marry him the next day.

“ Thus, you see, all that moralists endeavour to guard against is not only not made hateful, but is *recommended* by example ; and I need not refer you to Horace’s knowledge of mankind, where he says,

‘ Decipit exemplar, vitiis imitabile ! ’ ”

I own I had little to reply to this attack, new and unexpected as it was ; for, in truth, I felt, as my landlord at Oakingham said, *dumb-founded* ; nor, after such an invective against Fielding, could I, as I told Mr. Manners, expect much mercy to Smollett.

“ Smollett,” said he, “ does not equal Fielding in knowledge of the heart, and his pictures are too gross to be quite so dangerous. Nobody wishes to *imitate* Pickle. We turn from him as a spoilt, froward child, and in his attempt upon Emilia, we think him as great a fool as scoundrel : we wish him kicked for being so contemptible in his iniquity. The picture, too, is absolutely false. Feeling as he is represented to do towards Emilia, it is just neither more nor less than impossible that he should conceive the design upon her he does. And what shall we say to his being forgiven and taken back, not only to *her* heart, but that of her brother, described as so sensitive in every point of honour ? No ; the *conduct* of this once, and I fear still favourite story, is as despicable as a work of art, as it is dangerous and untrue as a picture of manners. As to the last, what youth that reads it but may say to himself, Let me but once gain a young woman’s affection, and no vice, dishonour, or infamy I may be guilty of, will deprive me of it. Is this the character of a virtuous woman ? ”

He asked this pointedly ; and I thought of Bertha, when I gave an emphatic “ No.”

“ Then, as to Roderick,” continued Mr. Manners, “ he had more of both talent and mind than Peregrine : but he sets out a bit of a blackguard, and his livery coat, pestle and mortar habits, and sharper conduct, keep him so almost to the end. We should not like to be compared with him ourselves. For my own part, I think there is too much horse-play in both these famous novels ; and though I relish broad humour as well as others, I feel that it may be repeated *ad nauseam* ; and when the novelty of it is faded, and we have closed the book, we are not in a hurry to open it again. I like laughter, but cannot laugh at the same joke (particularly a practical one) more than twice, or at farthest thrice. Give me the book which makes you think as well as laugh, and whose sentiment and moral, by addressing your heart and mind, can delight your pensive as well as your merry hours—*delectando pariterque monendo*. Such a book may lie upon your table, while the others

That example is a deceitful one which is imitable in its vices.

range on the higher shelves of your library, and are calculated chiefly for those who, as has been well said, read not so much to assist thought as to avoid thinking.

“In short, I would rather write one sentence which would give peace to the soul, inspire a virtuous feeling, or call up a happy recollection, than a whole volume of the most refined wit and genius, which, however admired for them, would leave the mind familiar with vice, and consequently lowered in its self-respect.”

I yielded to this, for I felt it myself; but seeing Richardson's works in handsome old bindings, I took down *Pamela*, and observed,

“Probably, from its situation, this author comes under your more favourable description. You will at least not class *him* among those who you say seduce us into vice.”

“Certainly not,” replied he; “and yet I have much to say before I would recommend even him to the study of very young people, which is too thoughtlessly, I think, done by parents, and guardians, and governesses. For where there are licentious descriptions of indecent scenes, though mingled ever so little with moral precepts ever so numerous, I have always observed that the first are more referred to and better remembered than the last. *Pamela*, therefore, with all its goodness and exhibition of virtue rewarded, is one of the last books I would put into the hands of a very young girl. Why should her pure thoughts—stainless, because ignorant that there can be such a thing as the seduction of a servant by her master, much more that there are indecencies, such as Richardson, with no sparing hand, lays open to his readers—be turned from the chaste channel in which they have hitherto run?

“The same may be said of the far-famed *Clarissa* itself, where there are scenes which no young daughter or sister of mine should ever with my consent, look into. Nor do I agree with Johnson, that Lovelace is made hateful. As Voltaire said the Devil was Milton's hero, so is Lovelace's wickedness made less detestable by the uncommon superiority of his mind over all his fellow rascals in the story. He is able, accomplished, insinuating, bold, always self-possessed, and though highly wicked, never mean. Even when killed, his spirit in the field has something redeeming in it, and we are not so angry with him as we ought to be. In other respects, too, the picture of manners is faulty. The lady herself, though a paragon of virtue, and a dreadful victim, is not too amiable or humble. Before her misfortunes, she is pert and flippant to her family, particularly to her sister, whom she crows over with vulgar vanity. All her letters, too, to her confidante, Miss Howe, shew what, in lower life, and if she had been uneducated, would indicate something very like what we call a minx.”

I was startled still more at this most unlooked-for criticism,

which I thought completely new and unprecedented, and began a string of propositions upon the excellent moral precepts and virtuous examples to be found in this classic writer,—when Mr. Manners stopt me.

“Spare,” said he, “the eloquent effusion which I see is coming, for I allow all Richardson’s genius, and above all, his knowledge of the windings and turnings of the heart. He is also most pleasingly dramatic, and, spite of twaddle and priggism in many of his characters, I could shut myself up with him at Selby House, or at Mr. B.’s halls in Bedfordshire or Lincolnshire, and feel that I saw and knew all his heroes and heroines. All I mean is, that there are passages even in him, which, from the danger of example, had better have been kept out of sight.

“Then as to Rousseau, whom I believe I also named, I need only quote his own preface to the *Héloïse*—(‘Let no woman of virtue read this work, for if she does she will be lost’)—to prove that he comes completely within the scope of Lord Lonsdale’s anathema upon *pernicious* books. On that account, these should never be read, I should say, by any unmarried woman—certainly not a very young one. But enough of this subject.”

Seeing that he wished to quit it for some other, I said nothing more than what was true—that he had placed it in a new light, and had forced me to agree with him. It made me indeed recall all that my unfortunate friend the pedlar told me, of the effect made upon him by the stories in *Gil Blas*, and I repeated it to my companion.

This gave Mr. Manners some pleasure, as confirming his opinions. It seems, however, that notwithstanding the mischiefs he allowed *Gil Blas* had often occasioned, he was a great admirer of the *Seigneur de Santillane*; not indeed for his probity, for, as he said, he was what the Duke of Lerma called him—a little of the picaroon;—but for the interest, as well as fidelity, to say nothing of their romance, of his pictures of human nature. At the same time, I found that a principal reason for his love for him was the early recollections (for it was one of the earliest books he had read) which the perusal of him always brought along with it.

The pleasures of these early recollections, of whatever kind, was, it seems, a favourite point with Manners, in his creed as to happiness. In his reading, therefore, those books were sure always to please which had first excited his mind as a child. This he carried so far as to derive no inconsiderable part of the pleasures from thumbing over the identical volumes, with their plates, figures, or little maps, which had so early engaged him.

In respect to *Gil Blas*, which brought on this part of the conversation, he had almost a mystic regard for the four little duodecimos which are known to most people.

“They are soiled and dog’s-eared,” said he, “but they bring back my youth with a feeling of even affection; nor would I exchange those uncouth old cuts of *Sa Seigneurie avec son secrétaire Scipion dans leur calèche*; or, *the Château of Lirias*; or that most notable lover, *Don Gaston de Cogollos*, guitar in hand, and hat and cloak on peg in the castle of Segovia—no, not for the most splendid edition of all Le Sage’s works.”

When I rather wondered at this, he said, “You are yourself too young to want early associations to refresh and soothe you; but be assured, after having battled with mankind, they are the most exquisite and purest pleasures you can enjoy; for they bring back that happy time of innocence and heart-springing gaiety, before the world has got hold of you, which no success in that world, whether in ambition, or the pursuit of fortune, can ever either equal or recall.”

“Charming recollections,” said I; “but can they really compensate for having abandoned your career in life? for, as you have hinted, you were once ambitious.”

“I was like Macbeth,” said he, “in the days of his innocence,

“Not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it.”

“Did you find the illness then so early?”

“I found, from the struggles of my contemporaries, that their’s was made of sterner stuff than mine; and from the little enjoyment it seemed to give them when attained, to say nothing of strifes and jealousies, I agreed that it was ‘of so airy and light a quality, that it was but a shadow’s shadow.’”

“Yet surely a passion for fame is noble. It is ‘the spur that the clear spirit doth raise.’”

“Yes; but the poet who said so, said likewise, it was an infirmity, though, as you say, ‘of noble mind.’ But I wish not to damp your career, whatever it may be. By all means see mankind, and judge for yourself, and Heaven preserve you from that morbid fastidiousness which unfitted me so soon for any thing but the life I now lead. I own, in a worldly point of view, it was a great fault.”

“It should seem so,” said I; “and the world must lament it.”

In this I was most sincere, for my respect for his mind rose with every part of our conversation.

“It only moves my wonder,” added I, “that you should so soon abandon such an incentive to virtue as fame, whether, an infirmity or not.”

“Why, after all,” observed he, “Fame is but a sorry jade—a liar, and a jilt. How many hundreds, who have climbed to the top of her ladder, have either tumbled off of themselves, or been pushed off by others, or by a sly jerk of her own? What has become of the

Harleys, the Pulteneys? What became of Swift, growling in banishment for thirty years? What did all Bolingbroke's fine parts do for him? Why did he leave the Loire, and come back to the Thames, merely to suffer a ten years' fever of disappointment, and then return? Surely, then, ambition is but a phantom, and sometimes a very ugly one. Even Cæsar, in his highest glory, felt it; for as says another poet,

'Fame is the shade of Immortality;
And in itself a shadow. Soon as caught,
Contemn'd; it shrinks to nothing in the grasp.
Consult th' ambitious; 'tis ambition's cure.
And is this all? cried Cæsar, in his height,
Disgusted.'

No; the calm recollections of what I was, before I had advanced to manhood, are worth all that I have since seen and felt, twenty times over."

"You would, perhaps, even wish for your school-days again?"

"Most assuredly. Not a day passes in this solitude of mine, cheerful as it is, in which I do not indulge that wish, from the reminiscences it brings of those happy hours,

'When all was innocence and all was gay,
And trifles charm'd, for every month was May.'

Or, in better language still,

'When nature pleased, for life itself was new,
And the heart promised what the fancy drew.'"

Pleased with these quotations, as well as the sentiment, and seeing him pause, I begged him to proceed, which he did.

"That is not," said he, "now my case; but here I sit, sometimes by the hour, revolving in my mind, now life is fast advancing, all that once made life so pleasing. You see these portraits and landscapes. I want them not to recall the scenes and feelings with which they are associated, for they are always present to me; but they add a zest and vividness to my recollections of those who are gone, upon which, now that the pangs occasioned by their loss are softened by time, I absolutely feast. He whom you are looking at, who has an air all over gentleman, honourable, kind, and good, was my earliest and most loved friend. In fact, we were schoolfellows, had the same pleasures, and shared the same sorrows; and I might say, as Milton did of Lawes, in that charming *Lycidas*,

'For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.'"

He then pointed out to me all the rich and expressive features of the portrait, which, in truth, exhibited, as he had intimated, in

¹ Young. Night 7.

mien and countenance, one of the most perfect gentlemen I had ever seen; the most engaging frankness united with sense and decision of character; so that Raeburn (for he was Scotch) had never painted any thing more imposing. I was somewhat moved myself at the emotion he shewed when he said this, and it prompted me to ask whose portrait it was.

"You could not have known him," replied he, "for he must have died soon after you were born, and besides that, spent his last years upon his paternal estate in Scotland, where he dealt out kindness and help to all who wanted it, and devoted himself to the training up of a numerous and accomplished family to the same virtues as adorned himself. Yes; he was, what I have called him, my earliest and best-loved friend. At school we were inseparable."

I felt a kind of shudder at this intimation, for I thought of Foljambe—with what recollections may be supposed—and rather hastily asked, if the world, after school-days were over, allowed them to continue that happy friendship?

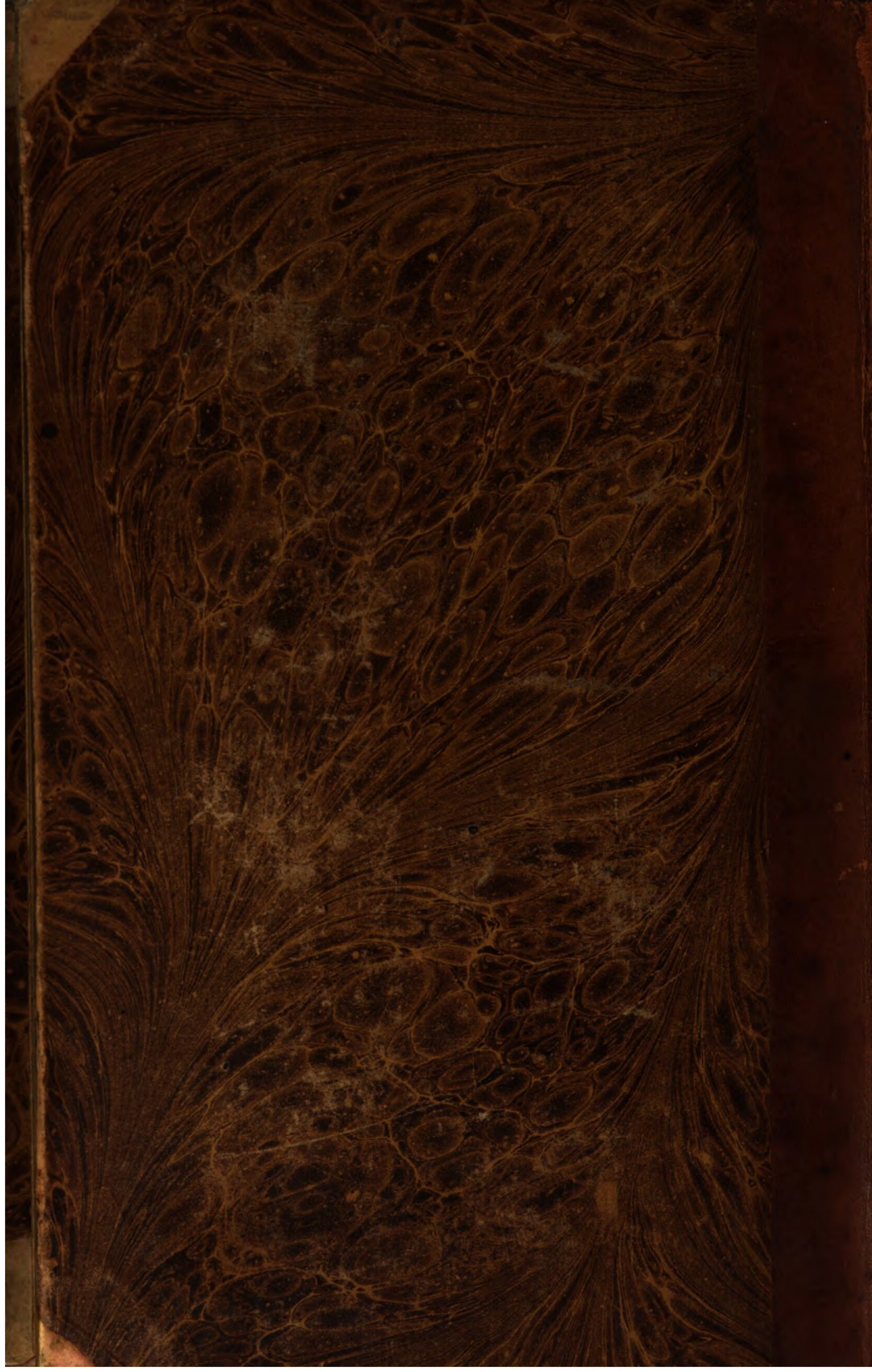
I know not whether I was agitated when I asked this; but eyeing me seriously, though kindly, he cried, "Is it even so? Is the world known to you in these respects so soon? Have you already set your heart upon what you thought a kindred heart, and lost it? Have you so soon been disappointed? But pardon me, if I am rude, I have no right—"

He was here a little embarrassed, but soon recovered, and said,

"In reply to your question, the world never made a difference, except to separate our persons; our hearts remained always the same, for Sir M. S. St——t (and he here named a very ancient baronet of Scotland) was as constant in his friendships, as in all other good graces that grace a gentleman. In fact, the original of this picture seems to have been born, as the picture itself seems to have been painted,

'To give the world assurance of a man.'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



Ward, Robert Plumer,

Works

Bd.: 2

Paris 1841

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